HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

LAGRANGE

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HISTORICAL CRITICISM

AND

THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY

PÈRE J. M. LAGRANGE

OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS PREACHERS

TRANSLATED BY

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

THE following translation of Père Lagrange's *La Méthode Historique* has been made from the second and enlarged edition published in March 1904. To the six Lectures originally published in February 1903 under the title of *La Méthode Historique surtout à propos de l'Ancien Testament*, has been added an open letter to Mgr. Batiffol, to which attention was drawn in *The Times* (Lit. Suppl., Jan. 1904, p. 10), in the course of an appreciative account of the author's life-work since his foundation of the Catholic Biblical School of Jerusalem, and of the *Revue Biblique*.

His sound critical work, worthy of the best Catholic traditions, has won him a world-wide reputation, and his position as a member of the Biblical Commission founded by Leo XIII. gives additional authority to his exposition of the soundness of the position Catholics occupy in dealing with the numerous biblical problems which force themselves upon the attention of all who read and think.

acc: 190

Translator's Note

The condensation of thought characteristic of lecture-work, readily lends itself to obscurity of expression, and this obscurity is not likely to be lessened in the process of translation into another language: it should further be borne in mind that the Lectures were delivered to the ecclesiastical students of a Catholic University, and that consequently the Lecturer was entitled to assume much in the way of terminology, which would have called for further explanation before a more popular audience.

In the translation, the Vulgate form of Old Testament names has been retained. The references have been verified, and in several instances corrected; and the full title of works to which reference is made has been given wherever possible. As regards Assyrian and Babylonian names, the transliteration current amongst English scholars has been adopted, except where a biblical form already exists.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE lectures contained in this little volume were delivered at the *Institut Catholique* of Toulouse on November 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11, 1902. They were drawn up with the conviction that a few sincere words might be useful to those who are still under a misapprehension as to the need of historical criticism, particularly as applied to the study of the Old Testament. The only reason for publishing them, in spite of their incompleteness and their want of didactic form, is the fear that the spoken word alone, which easily lends itself to misunderstanding, would not attain the purpose intended. With the aid of the printed text, everyone can judge for himself. Hence it is that the lectures are published as they stand, without learned references, but not without allusion to recent publications, and with all the transitory characteristics inseparable from the circumstances of their utterance. It will be well to bear in mind that they are not treatises, but lectures. It would be impossible in

six hours to cover the whole field of historical criticism, even though one confined oneself to the Old Testament. The subjects were selected for the purpose of conveying general views. The first three are concerned with principles, hence the need of alluding to the New Testament; the other three are concerned with applications chosen from a multitude of others. It will, of course, be readily understood that any responsibility attached to the publication of these lectures in no way involves the *Institut Catholique* of Toulouse. It is customary there to invite lectures from scholars from without, in order to make a closer acquaintance with their ideas.

AUTHOR'S NOTE TO THE SECOND IMPRESSION[1]

It is not for me to speak of the reception given to this little book, a reception far more favourable than could ever have been anticipated: one cannot but thank the reviews and newspapers for the sympathy they show. In the pages of the *Vérité Française* a distinct note of absolute disapproval was sounded. The tone and the contents of M. Dessailly's articles obviously prevent our entering into any controversy with him, although, at the same time, we are most sincerely anxious to give any explanation that might be courteously asked for, with a view to arriving at an understanding.

The vague and conventional character of the reservations made by numerous other reviewers renders it extremely difficult to offer similar explanations. They

[1] As these lectures do not, strictly speaking, form a book, the author has contented himself with merely correcting obvious slips of the pen, leaving uncorrected certain mistakes kindly pointed out to him, and to which he pleads guilty.

say, for instance, that they agree with me in nine cases out of ten, without specifying in what they disagree, a course which certainly does not make for clearness. At other times it is extremely difficult to see in what exactly the disagreement consists. Thus, Herr Vetter, whom we thank for his favourable reception of the first five lectures, declares in so many words that he feels bound to disagree with the sixth.[1] The reviewer, who is certainly a most competent and distinguished critic, will not hear of myths in the Book of Genesis: "a distinction," he says, "must be made between the historical contents and the popular form in which they have come down, but not between history and myth." Now, we declared (p. 202) that "Legendary primitive history has its place between the myth, which is the story of things personified and deified, and real history."

We do not even differ as to the use of terms, for we, too, prefer to avoid the word 'myth.' Further, the reviewer seems to think that we do not admit the historicity of the Patriarchs, from the time of Abraham. This is quite contrary to our clearly expressed opinion. But if popular legend developed that history in its own peculiar way, as Herr Vetter grants it did, are not such stories as that of the wife of Lot, and the origin of Moab and Ammon, typical instances of the process?

There is a point on which we do disagree. Herr

[1] *Biblische Zeitschrift*, 1904, p. 80 *seq.*

Vetter places much more trust than we do in the power of purely oral traditions to preserve for centuries the memory of historical facts. We are inclined to think that this difference of opinion would be less prominent if by historical facts we meant the same thing. In any case, however, it is a critical question which in no way involves the historicity of the Patriarchs from the time of Abraham, for then we are dealing with a period in which writing was common; and, on the other hand, not much time is required for a legend to spring up around an historical personage. Many examples might be cited, and in our own day we have the example of the Napoleonic legend. Legend, however, is not synonymous with falsehood. Critical history is an approximation to truth by the aid of written documents; legend is another approximation to a man's character, or to the influence of an idea, made by popular imagination. Legend has its measure of truth, which is frequently greater than that to which the critics can lay claim; and M. Brunetière could say to M. Frédéric Masson,[1] "Yes; you have shown us, in the Napoleon of history, the Napoleon of legend, and, thanks to you, we understand, we see that they are one. We are able to establish, and you have proved to us, that if the real Napoleon was not exactly the hero of the popular song, nor the Napoleon of Hugo, nor the

[1] On his becoming a member of the French Academy, Jan. 1904.

Napoleon of Béranger, yet he bore a closer resemblance to them than to the creation of a Jung or a Lanfrey."

And similarly we may say—although we do not dispose of the same means of checking, and must keep in mind the difference of environment and of the age—that the Abraham of the Bible is a "truer picture than the Abraham of this or that critic"—which is a point of the utmost importance.

From the biblico-theological standpoint, the question is not so much one of historical accuracy, interest in which is quite secondary, as of the religious and worthy character of the sacred writings,—a character upon which we have laid no less stress than Herr Vetter.

There remains the question of the amount of credence to be given to tradition. It is a matter in which there is entire freedom of opinion, and probably Herr Vetter would be less emphatic if the question at issue concerned—always abstracting from a Church instituted for the precise purpose of safeguarding the deposit of certain truths—history in the strict sense of the word, and the accuracy which is its marked characteristic, as opposed to the mere transmission of names, ideas, and legends. This was the distinction I endeavoured to draw. Clearly there would be no basis for discussion were we to argue about times in which writing was unknown; but we are able to see what

becomes of historical facts when tradition alone is invoked without sufficient account being taken of writing.

The generally accepted history of the East until the deciphering of the cuneiform and hieroglyphic inscriptions is a case in point. The whole history of Nineveh and Babylon rested upon the names of Semiramis and Sardanapalus. The two names had not been invented, but the first was that of a goddess, and the second, a type of luxury, recalled the memory of the most warlike of Assyrian kings. Now, the Greeks who handed down these stories were certainly sensible people, and very careful in collecting such information concerning ancient history as appeared to them true. Again, Cheops is historical; but what has the building of the Pyramids to do with the stories Herodotus wrote down with a feeling of suspicion which later historians overlooked? Semiramis is no more historical than is Pope Joan; and Nineveh had scarcely perished, and none knew how the end had come.

The history of comparatively recent epochs, as is well known, is plunged in complete obscurity; and it has been said, without exaggeration, that there is no drama in the whole of the world's history so well known to us as the Peloponnesian War, thanks to Thucydides.

It is, unfortunately, but too true that the first condition of sound historical criticism is, that we should not seek from history more than history can give; and after we have gauged its gaps and its incom-

pleteness, however passionately fond we may be of it, we can only thank God for having placed the Sacred Scripture and the whole system of belief in a region which exclusively depends no more on history than it does on philosophy. The part it plays is still striking enough; but if it redounds to its honour to be associated with revelation, the Bible loses none of its dignity because it contains less history than was thought when history was less well known.

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* *

We have been asked to explain more fully the two methods of applying historical criticism to the Bible to which we alluded in our preface: the letter to Mgr. Batiffol,[1] given in the appendix, may serve this purpose.

I need not say that this letter never had the pretension to be "a complete refutation of the system of M. Loisy." That learned exegetical scholar went outside the field of erudition, and sketched a vast synthesis (?) which involved at once the whole of doctrinal and sacramental development within the Church, together with the first principles of faith. Indifferent or sceptical admirers of this synthesis agreed with the more fiery champions of religious conservatism, in drawing up a summary of it which made it break with traditional Catholicism. The author's friends contented them-

[1] Originally published in the *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, Dec.–Jan. 1903–1904.

selves with pleading its obscurity and the possibilities of misunderstanding, by insisting upon the author's motives, which we believe were good. More than uncommon courage, and no less uncommon ability, would be required to treat offhand so many questions. To us it seemed that both the author and part of the public gave evidence of too much impetuosity; and all we desired to say was, that such impetuosity seemed to us to have no satisfactory reason behind it. From the exegetical point of view, we brought up texts definite enough, according to the so-called critical method: these reasons have not even been discussed. There only remained for us to assign the system, from the standpoint of gospel criticism, its place among the ephemeral constructive efforts which rise up under our very eyes among our neighbours in Germany. What might have been foreseen has really happened! A critic, no less eminent than Julius Wellhausen himself, can find no trace of the parousia in the authentic sayings of Jesus!

It is certainly hard to have to face such a conclusion; but in such serious circumstances, why not tell the public and M. Loisy himself what we believe to be true?

With the same straightforward frankness, we declare that we should by far have preferred to have worked side by side with the eminent exegetical scholar if he had contented himself with claiming the free

use of the best critical and exegetical methods. However disturbed the state of criticism may be, it is less fatally dangerous to Catholicism than the stagnation of twenty years ago. The worst of it is, that we were so self-satisfied and forgetful even of those *irrisiones infidelium* against which St. Thomas declared we should be on our guard.

In such matter as this, sincerity—even at the cost of passing scandal—is worth much more than dissimulation, which only prolongs the evil. Throughout the following pages we bear in mind the mixed character of the contents of the Bible. No Catholic exegetical scholar can claim to withdraw himself from the dogmatical judgement of the Church. On the other hand, no authority can withdraw our productions, as far as their scientific part goes, from the criticism of competent men, nor yet prevent that verdict from being made use of against the Church if their inadequacy is manifest. Otherwise, what is given forth under the name of Catholic exegesis would do as much harm to our faith as would rash innovations, and tend to create a state of mind unworthy of the intellectual honour of the Church. Side by side with the dogmas of the Church, which are the very life of our souls and the salvation of the world, which not even a pious hand may touch to change, exegetes—not the Church—had raised a structure of not a few pretended historical

and literary dogmas. The Middle Ages, enamoured of metaphysics, found the burden light to bear, for—with God nothing is impossible. Heavy as it already was in the days of the Renaissance, the burden was joyfully taken up by Protestantism, eager to escape from pontifical authority; but it grew more and more heavy with the more or less happy solutions of commentators, and became absolutely unbearable for an age which had been initiated into the knowledge of the ancient East. It is essential that in this matter light should be made, and sane criticism be listened to. Yet, even so, the greatest care must be taken: criticism involves prudence and circumspection; but it is well that it should be known that we are at liberty to make use of the knowledge of our day.

When Leo XIII. created the Biblical Commission, and Pius X. instituted the Doctorate of Sacred Scripture, they evidently intended that these studies should be pursued in the twofold spirit of respect for dogma and regard for sound conscientious work. All Catholics hold that such a combination is possible: the future will show that it has been realized.

JERUSALEM, *March* 1904.

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HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

LECTURE I

BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND THE DOGMAS OF THE CHURCH

UNCHANGING continuity is a characteristic even of the West, and in the unchanging East changes may be found. Nature, as it were, playfully sets herself to solve the problem of ever bringing forth novelties without any break in the links of the chain that binds them together. Human society develops in a very similar way, though here the changes are accompanied by painful convulsions: for the interests infringed by the newly produced state of things are those of creatures born to suffer. In the order of ideas, and still more so in that of religious ideas, the shocks, if less evident, go none the less deep. These introductory words will not appear too pompous when it is remembered that the subject of my lectures is the Holy Bible, the noblest of all books, and modern Biblical Criticism, which many consider a source of danger.

Historical Criticism and the Old Testament

Let me at the outset place myself under the patronage of the glorious Dominican teacher St. Thomas of Aquin. To us men of the present day he appears with all the authority of an already venerable tradition, but what especially impressed his contemporaries was the extreme novelty of his teaching. This is accurately reflected by his most reliable biographer, William de Tocco, who, in describing his method, uses the word *new* no less than eight times. "*Erat enim novos in sua lectione movens articulos, novum modum et clarum determinandi inveniens et novos reducens in determinationibus rationes, ut nemo, qui ipsum audisset nova docere et novis rationibus dubia definire, dubitaret, quod eum Deus novi luminis radiis illustraret, qui statim tam certi coepisset* [*esse*] *judicii, ut non dubitaret, novas opiniones docere et scribere, quas Deus dignatus esset noviter inspirare.*"[1]

It is clear that new questions were presenting themselves, and St. Thomas answered them in a new way and with new arguments. Even in his own day it had to be recognised that there was something new, based upon new reasons; and the conclusion drawn was that God must have enlightened him with a new light to enable him not to hesitate as he set forth with so much assurance the new opinions with which God had inspired him in all their newness. It may be tautological and wordy, but it is expressive. For any man to imagine he had received new lights from God would be little short of impudence and

[1] A. SS. vii. Martii. [i. 661. F.] n. 15, apud MANDONNET, *Siger de Brabant et l'averroïsme latin au xiii^e^ siècle*, p. lxi. (Freiburg, 1903).

folly; but no less foolish would it be to deny the progress of doctrinal teaching, which is itself impossible without the putting forth of new opinions. When we see a movement led by conscientious men who are loyal to the authority of the Church, the charge of novelty brought against them can only have weight where dogma is concerned; no one has the right to forbid the Holy Ghost to shed new lights upon the Church under the pretext that the men of old have seen all and said all that was to be seen and said.

Yet such a reaction never fails to take place, and generally it is justified by the excesses of the innovators. In St. Thomas's day the over-bold innovators were the extreme Aristotelians, who threatened to drag down men's minds to a positive system lacking moral elevation, and void of religious feeling. St. Thomas struggled against those tendencies; but he fully understood that the safest way of forestalling the danger, and at the same time of advancing the cause of sound doctrine, was to place at the disposal of the truth whatever good there was to be found in the results of a prolonged period of intellectual activity.

Whatever was sound he made his own. The old conservative party could only see absolute negations in the rising Aristotelianism, and in their eyes moderate Aristotelianism only embodied a spirit of concession fraught with danger to the faith. If you give way on one point, who knows whither it will lead you? Is not borrowing from the enemies of the Church like introducing the enemy within the walls? More-

over, it was said that the spirit of devotion was endangered by this new system. Finally it was decided that the condemnation of the contrary teaching could only attain its full effect by including St. Thomas himself; and so this condemnation was pronounced on March 7, 1277, by Stephen Tempier, Bishop of Paris, and a Dominican, Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury, was found to emphasise the condemnation on March 18 of the same year.

It is necessary to recall these facts—for we can no longer imagine the saints without their aureole, and their teaching has ever the appearance of beneficent rays shining down upon a delighted world. They, however, had their difficulties, and the struggle with the foes without was not always the principal object of their secret anguish. But if they went through those trials without being overcome, if passing dissensions have given place to general agreement, it is because the same principles of faith enlighten all alike, and the same supreme authority of the head of the Church finally settles all disputes. Such must, even now, be our standard.

We are all agreed as to our first principles; they were laid down by Vincent of Lerins with a precision such that the Church has made it her own at the Vatican Council.[1]

[1] Crescat igitur et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam singulorum, quam omnium, tam unius hominis, quam totius ecclesiae, aetatum et saeculorum gradibus, intelligentia, scientia, sapientia; sed in suo dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademque sententia. (*Conc. Vatic. Const. Dogm.*, Sess. III, *De fide Catholica*, cap. iv. *ad finem.*)

As regards the substance of Catholic dogma, we absolutely deny that there can be any true progress in changing it, or in understanding it in a sense other than that of the Church. The points are here so clear that to set them out distinctly will suffice to prevent any misunderstanding. It is, of course, conceivable that we might be confronted with "religious progress," or with "a more perfect religion." Now, if religion has any meaning, it indicates relations with God. The aim of religion is to draw us closer to God, and the most perfect religion is that which draws us closest to Him. When the union is such that the mind cannot conceive anything more intimate, we have attained, I think, the final degree of perfection in so far as man is capable of attaining thereunto. Our religion proposes to our belief that God united Himself to the human race by the Incarnation, that having become incarnate He unites Himself to us in this life by the Holy Eucharist, and that, while further uniting Himself to us by grace, He offers us union with Him in glory by penetrating into the very vision of His inscrutable nature. The impossibility of any further "religious progress" stands out clearly from this simple summary of religious teaching. It might indeed be said that the whole idea is too lofty, that it is ideal, not real, that it is merely chimerical, but no one can propose anything higher without first eliminating one of the factors of the problem—a human race desirous of drawing near to God. Those who are no longer willing to believe are bound to conclude that for

centuries humanity has mistaken its way in busying itself with religion, that the most perfect form of religion is a mere dream, and that all that remains to be done is to break up the last surviving idol, the idea of a personal God, and to reject once for all every form of religion. That conclusion would be straightforward and clear. Instead of seeking to cloak their results under the name of "religious progress," they ought to content themselves with a claim to have advanced towards freedom of thought.

The influence of traditional beliefs, however, is still so powerful, and so evident are the benefits Christianity brings in its wake, so strong the attraction that draws us to God, that it is with evident unwillingness and hesitation that Protestantism[1] breaks away from Jesus Christ and from God, and so "progress" is made to consist in minimising dogma to meet the demands of reason, in softening whatever would seem to be beyond our strength, and thus the critics effect a compromise between the heritage of the past and the aspirations of to-day. Modern criticism is expected to show that Jesus is not responsible for Catholic dogma, nor yet for such dogma as still survives in Protestant circles. History is to be the confederate of what is nothing short of sleight-of-hand, and success will be assured by attracting public attention elsewhere: the Church is the guilty one. In Protestant circles it has long been a commonplace that the Church has never understood the Scriptures,

[1] The Author's strictures on Protestantism apply, of course, to Protestantism on the Continent. [Transl.]

that she interprets them in her own way, that she is never at a loss to find therein her dogmas, which are developed in the course of time to meet the credulity of the faithful. . . . So that men are quite prepared to admit that the Church has never really understood the religious truth of which she considered herself the depository, and so our contemporaries take it as a matter of course that historical criticism should at length show them what true Christianity is, what is the Christianity of Jesus.

But there is a further and still stranger fact: the attempt made to cause these doctrines to penetrate into the Church itself with the pretension of not failing thereby in the respect due to the Church.

Newspapers affect to speak in guarded terms of intellectual ecclesiastics, determined to remain within the Church, but without making her dogmas their own, or at least without assigning to them their traditional meaning. In their eyes the Church is a grand organisation of peace and charity, of respect and discipline. It is loved for its works of charity and not for its faith. Names have been mentioned, and in some cases those named have protested against the insult. But that such a sadly lamentable state of mind is occasionally to be met with, is proved by the fatal ending of some cases but too well known. For all cannot reconcile themselves to so false a position; and as long as the Church is composed of the faithful, none who have lost the faith can loyally remain members of it.

It is not easy to lay one's finger on the source

of the evil. Neo-Kantism, somewhat widely spread it is said even among the clergy, would seem to be the principal source. Père Fontaine, who has resolutely set himself against these tendencies, adds, as a further cause, the inadequacy of clerical studies, and Monseigneur Le Camus gives to this complaint the full weight of his authority. Speaking of those whom the danger has filled with fear, and who wrongly lay it at the door of learning, he says:—

"Their simplicity, however, becomes unjustly aggressive when it goes so far as to declare learning to be a danger for our priests, and to be the cause of the growing stream of apostasies, or, to use the accepted term, of *évasions*, from the ranks of the clergy. Is not the inadequate training given in the seminary the true explanation of certain falls, rare, no doubt, which are not occasioned by the most common cause of all, by which I mean the heart of the poor priest, demoralised by idleness, troubled by ignorance, and given over to the passions of the flesh, and that not unfrequently because he had nothing in his head which might give rise to the noble and saving passions of the mind?"[1]

Some have tried to make biblical criticism responsible for these apostasies. If, in point of fact, there really was in the Church a body of priests

[1] *Lettre sur la formation ecclésiastique de ses séminaristes*, p. 5. Paris, Oudin, 1902. Only the respect due to the writer makes us refrain from protesting against the use of the word Seminary. For not even in purely ecclesiastical sciences can any seminary give complete and systematic training. Would it not, then, be well to make good use of the Institutes founded for Higher Studies in special branches?

claiming for their critical studies complete independence alike in method and in statement—and who in their freedom of research never took into account the definitions and authority of the Church—that would not be an "absorbing of Protestant ideas," but, to use the vigorous expression of Monseigneur Isoard, it would be nothing short of a leak in the ship. Happily the phenomenon does not exist.

As for ourselves, if we do not declare more frequently our filial submission to the teaching of the Vicar of Christ, it is because of that sense of delicacy which prevents one unveiling the deepest feelings of the soul. And even to-day it is not my intention to make a display of protestations of loyalty. The rules which Catholics are obliged to follow are well known. It is no business of mine to prove the existence of those principles and their obligatory character; I prefer showing their wisdom, their agreement with sound historical method, and at the same time the fact that modern criticism, so far from disturbing the Church's authority, has rather set forth in a much clearer light the closeness of the bond that unites Holy Scripture and the Church.

It is not necessary to say that we are neither attacking nor defending anyone—the all-important point is doctrine: we set up no pretensions to blame the rashness of some nor to chide the intellectual sloth of others. Our aim is to explain how biblical criticism can and ought to be practised amongst us according to sound historical method.

There is no need to state the nature and claims of

criticism in general. It has ever been admitted that it might and ought to be applied to Holy Scripture, and in that case it has ever been known as "sacred criticism." The division of labour rendered necessary in our day has introduced the convenient division into textual, literary, and subject criticism. Textual criticism aims at reproducing the primitive text as it came from the pen of the author of the book. Literary criticism finds out the type of book the author meant to produce, whether practical, moral, historical; whether he was an eye-witness or drew his information from other sources; whether these sources were written or oral; whether he has remodelled his materials, or been content with abridging or compiling. Subject criticism is concerned with the subject-matter of the book, discusses its truthfulness, if the subject be historical, not merely according to the intrinsic guarantees of sincerity and sound information it seems to offer, but according to known historical facts; while if the subject be doctrinal, it weighs its meaning and bearing. This is what German and English scholars call Higher Criticism.

Whilst we make use of these various forms of criticism, none should be followed to the complete exclusion of the other. A specialist may be left to collect variant readings; a historian may make it his duty to gather materials. But the exegetical scholar must at the very least take into account three phenomena which cast light one upon the other: he must take into account the history of the transmission of the text, the literary style, and the historical

and doctrinal background of the book. It is in the combination of these divers elements that Higher Criticism really consists.

Having laid this down, or rather briefly recalled it, I hold the first duty of biblical criticism to be submission to the authority of the Catholic Church, as a necessary consequence of the very principle of revelation.

Even at the present day, in spite of all contrary appearances, man is always keenly anxious to make more definite his position in relation to things divine, and provided he has but a grain of sound sense, that relation to things divine will be one of submission and respect: it will be religion. Religion is indeed found everywhere; unfortunately it is but too often accompanied by lamentable errors, so that clear-sighted honest minds noting the fact are saddened and discouraged, and in spite of the secret cravings of their soul, shut themselves up in dreary agnosticism.

Surely it would be more reasonable to recognise in our very cravings and difficulties an evident proof of the need in which we stand of the help of God. Either all religions are deceptive chimeras, or it is our duty to seek from God the religion we are to practise; that is to say, we ought to ask the Most High to determine Himself the relations He would deign to maintain with us—and that is revelation. On the other hand, and to-day less than ever, human reason is not inclined to admit a continual intervention of God in exceptional and miraculous ways.

Revelation, once completed, and in the final form

of which we have spoken, is deposited with men grouped together in the Church. Now it is essential that this precious deposit, if it is to be of any use to us, should be well guarded; and that is what is meant by the Holy Ghost's assistance of the Church, an assistance which extends to the whole of revelation, whether oral or written. All this we learnt in our Catechism, and even now, we consider it right and fitting, worthy of the wisdom and goodness of God, and well adapted to our human nature.

It is a state of subjection, we must admit, but how much more rational it is than being the slaves of mere documents? The history of the past reassures as to the future. We have no reason for fearing that the Church will ever depart from its time-honoured course of action. And there are few pages in history that do more honour to the human intellect, than those which give us an account of the intervention of the *magisterium* of the Church in the question of the interpretation of Scripture. The authority of the text of Scripture made itself felt in the Christian conscience from the first. But it is quite clear from history that nearly all the attempts that have ever been made—even down to our own day—to impose systems more or less absurd upon credulous minds have been based upon the Holy Scriptures; and, moreover, there can be no doubt whatever that in rejecting those interpretations the Church has rendered a service to common-sense as well as to freedom of conscience. This has been the case from the time of Gnosticism, which Harnack has shown to have been a

school of exegetical thought, down to the Protestantism of Calvin, who in the name of the Word of God subjected men's consciences to dogmas now vigorously repudiated by modern Protestantism, and in particular to those of original sin and predestination. There is no yoke more heavy to bear than the slavery of the "letter" in matters of religious truth. To the letter that kills, St. Paul had already contrasted the spirit that vivifies. That spirit is doubtless before all and above all the Holy Spirit who assists the Church, but it is also human reason.

Men are only too ready to represent theologians as seated in a doctrinal Olympus, whence they launch forth their thunderbolts upon poor mortals. But theologians live in the world, and they are as deeply moved as others by the currents that trouble men's opinions. They are in touch with the general movement of human reason, and do not seek to oppose narrowly interpreted documents to its lawful views. We have there a guarantee of human liberty, and therein we have the advantage of a living authority over a paper authority. Thanks to this organism Catholicism is ever in harmony with the men who march forward: it develops.

Exactly, they say, it develops. You admit development. If, then, it goes through a process of development so as to keep in touch with the progress of human reason, we conclude that it does not faithfully preserve the thoughts of the men of old, and that the boast of unchangeable dogma is a mere decoy.

I cannot now fully enter upon the solution of this

serious problem, to which I will return in my second conference. What I am most concerned with at present is to set out clearly the relation between Scripture and the Church.

As I have already said, the Church declares she has never varied on the essential meaning of her dogmas, and that she intends strenuously to maintain that position. New ways are proposed, but she refuses to engage in them. The Church is perfectly well aware that from the day on which she did so she would cease to be a religious society, the guardian of a divine deposit, and become a mere arena of discussion, or a club. And even were the leadership of all the works of charity in the world offered to her, she knows full well that faith is the bond and root of charity.

This firm attitude, in spite of present stress, is but the traditional expression of her faithfulness in the past. If she has changed, it must have been without being aware of it. The change, then, was imperceptible, but even if such imperceptible changes are in fact the law of nature, we have no right to suppose their existence in the order of ideas there precisely where written monuments bear witness to the ideas of old. And so, even without invoking the fundamental reason of divine assistance, we see what a marvellous harmony is in fact established between the Church and the Scriptures. We are sometimes told that even were the Scriptures to disappear, the Church would still be the infallible mistress of truth. We may grant the point; but in presence of a gift of God, it were perhaps more

fitting to accept it with gratitude, and to profit by it with all our heart and soul, rather than to neglect it on the plea that it is not of absolute necessity.

The Holy Scripture is the means chosen by God whereby to assist His Church, and to assure the perfect harmony of her movements.

On the one hand we have the Church, a living society, moving with the human race, developing, progressing, without ever being bound, against the dictates of reason, to the apparently obvious literal meaning of a misunderstood text. On the other hand we have the documents retaining their full authority. Blind development is checked by the saving barrier of the Holy Scriptures, which bears strong witness, in God's own name, to the faith of the primitive Church.

Thus theologians who study modern dogma must never lose sight of the documents in which the dogma of the ancient Church is reflected with all its genuine sincerity, while biblical scholars have much to gain by never straying from the authority of the Church. This is the point on which I have further to insist.

It is quite evident that the subject-matter of exegetical study is extremely complex in character, and that no one can pretend to treat a book containing truths of faith in the same way as an ordinary book, in which case risks are small and each one can answer for himself.

The reason is, that the faith we profess depends upon a revelation that forms part of history, and from which it is impossible entirely to separate it. In the matter of textual criticism, you cannot, without com-

promising your faith, prefer the text of the Sinaitic Syriac palimpsest, understood in the sense of Jesus being the real son of Joseph; while in the matter of literary criticism, serious difficulties would present themselves were it maintained that the Fourth Gospel drew its inspiration solely from Philo, and that the connection of his Logos with Jesus of Nazareth was a mere literary artifice. And, again, what Christian could maintain on purely historical grounds that Jesus did not die upon the Cross?

It may, of course, be said that those are excesses from which sane criticism would recoil, that such is not the purpose for which freedom and independence is demanded, and that there is nothing to fear from a rational form of criticism. All this we willingly grant, and if you can guarantee that your criticism will ever be in accordance with right reason, take your freedom and use your independence! What Christian could ever fear that rational criticism could ever be a danger to the faith? But I would ask you to recall to mind the numberless blunders of critics who considered themselves fully reliable; think of the systems overthrown by other systems. We must be on our guard against this danger, for we are ever in close contact with things unknowable to reason alone, and we must beware of subjective feelings in divine matters.

A very large measure of liberty is accorded us. We carry on our studies, studies complex in character, under the double light of revelation and reason, without our reason being in the very least hampered

in its search by ready-made positive conclusions, unless it be in dealing with one of those very rare instances in which the sense of the text has been positively defined. And even in that case a critic might follow critical methods.[1]

Under such conditions obedience is no irrational slavery, because part of our study turns upon supernatural facts concerning which we have received no private revelation from God.

Moreover, I maintain that in using the science of criticism without losing sight of the authority of the Church, our method is sound, since it is one of the primary canons of criticism that the environment should be taken into account, and it is precisely in the Church that we have the environment in which the Sacred Scriptures appeared.

Let us first turn to textual criticism. The Church has no idea of guaranteeing the integrity and absolute authenticity of the text. I may even go so far as to say that on this point there is no complaint of want of freedom. But when a reading involving a point of doctrine is in question, would it be prudent to accept it against the authority of the Church? Would it be in keeping with sound criticism to accept as genuine the reading of the Lewis Syriac palimpsest if we suppose it endangers the doctrine of the supernatural

[1] Thus Cornely, whose work is classical, after quoting in his *Introductio* (i. p. 589) the passage in St. Paul to the Romans on original sin (Rom. v. 12) as having been directly defined by the Church, in his Commentary on that Epistle sets aside the translation *in quo* cited by the Council of Trent from the Vulgate (*Commentar. ad hoc loc.*).

conception of Jesus Christ.' Now, without mentioning the weight of the authority of all the other texts, I declare that such a reading could not have arisen in the Church in the beginning. We must never lose sight of the reciprocal relations of the Holy Scriptures to the Church and of the Church to the Holy Scriptures. An authentic document of apostolic origin had force of law but by that very fact it became part of the belief of the Church. And even could a document of doubtful authenticity have prevailed, as some critics say the reason would be that it was in full conformity with what had hitherto been believed. The Gospel of Peter did not become canonical. The name alone did not suffice to make it so—as many other apocryphal works prove. Some pretend that the Apostles were in contradiction on fundamental points. Such was Baur's system, which is condemned by the very fact that such a division would have lasted, and the harmony which in reality prevailed would be inexplicable. We are of course arguing on the broad lines of faith, on the hypothesis of an attempt to introduce into the pseudo-primitive text what the Church holds to be heresy. For anything else would be of minor importance; nor would it be possible to insist on the preference being given, in a critical edition, to a word or a stop which would give the text a more dogmatic meaning or would supply one more text in the defence of a dogma. To remain in touch with dogmatic teaching does not mean to exhibit misplaced zeal on behalf of a dogma. Moreover, ecclesiastical authority evidently acts wisely in

placing at the disposal of the faithful an official edition to which no one can claim without ridiculous pretension either to add or to take from. And thus a passage may form part of her authentic teaching without any pretension on her part to impose upon all men the results of her textual criticism, results which she has declared, through Clement VIII., to be open to correction.

When, then, in our character of critical scholars we decline to admit a text contrary to the received dogma of the Church, we are taking into account two moral impossibilities, a course in harmony with the laws of critical science. For if the passage in question is authentic, the Church must have changed on an important point, and that in spite of an explicit text she had previously accepted and made her standard; the alternative is that you set forth as authentic a passage the Church never made her own. In either case the impossibility is absolute if we only consider the date of our manuscripts. The most that could be granted would be that time had rendered the dogmatic sense more impressionable and more intolerant. There has been a toning down of phrases which did not seem sufficiently respectful to God, or quite in agreement with the strict exactness of dogmatic formularies. We do not seek to deny it, and it is a point that might well be threshed out. But if we maintain that these pressing demands were not made in the beginning: that the Church, still under the guidance of the Apostles, had more doctrinal receptivity; that she did not think of reacting against the

passages, of revising or even correcting them,—we are simply insisting upon the other side of the argument. She would then have assimilated the dogma proposed to her, and nothing could have prevailed against the first impression at the necessarily later period of the recensions prompted by critical science, or by anxiety for orthodoxy. A similar line of argument might be followed in treating of literary or subject criticism.

Nay, we will go so far as to say that the latest critical results only tend to set forth more and more clearly the close bond God has established between Holy Scripture and the Church. The first onslaught of criticism was brutal. In France our feelings were grated upon alike by Baur's decisive tone and Strauss's subtle combinations, both tending by different paths to the same end, viz., to render the Gospels historically worthless because of their late composition. When insinuations are made about the Church not being able to defend her ground against the attacks of critics, the fact, that from this position critics themselves have had to retire, is overlooked. Our apologetical writers have proved, and not without solid arguments, the evident good faith of the evangelists, and the impossibility of bringing them down late enough to give time for the growth of syncretism or myth. Their claims have thus been recognised even across the Rhine, but although the investigation has not proved favourable to Baur, no one could now say that matters are in the *statu quo ante bellum*. The investigation has enabled us to enter more deeply

into the secret of the style of the New Testament writers, and to make more clear the personal element in their work.

Certain results are set forth as final: we may well ask ourselves whether they are in accord with the authority of the Church. Has the Church a fixed tradition as to the authors of the Gospels, their literary work, and the personal factors of their work when they reproduce the words of Jesus? These are questions of the very highest importance. If we pretend that because a book is inspired, and hence is of the Holy Ghost, that, therefore, it matters little who the author may be, we forget that we are no longer concerned, as was St. Gregory, with the Book of Job, a sublime poem, the date of which is immaterial, but we are concerned with the eye-witnesses of the miracles and of the teaching of the very Founder of our faith. On the other hand, we must not forget that here, as elsewhere, the Church holds, above all, to the essence of things. Critics maintain that the canonical Gospel of St. Matthew was written in Greek; an ancient tradition relates that St. Matthew wrote his gospel in Aramaic. Therefore it is not the same work. We cannot have recourse to the loophole of a translation. But critics willingly admit a Semitic original as the partial source of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. They will never know exactly of what that Gospel consisted, nor yet prove that its author could not have been the Apostle Matthew. So that it is not impossible to imagine an agreement between the critics and tradition—and, moreover, it would be extremely

unwise to depart from the tradition of the ancient Church on the point.

Next to St. Matthew, St. John is especially attacked. Here, however, Catholic writers are far from giving way, because the proofs alleged are far from being decisive. There remains a psychological difficulty to be explained, whoever is the author of the Gospel—the Apostle or the Presbyter—and it is the same within twenty years. There are so many things one would have to know before one could definitely and clearly settle what is morally possible, or even probable, that it would be rash to come to any conclusion at variance with the testimony of a venerable tradition.[1]

However important these questions of authenticity may be, they are less so than other problems less well known, more delicate, and particularly more complex. I refer to the literary composition of the Gospels. The long investigation set on foot by the Tübingen School came to naught when it was seen that the Apostles had not written doctrinal pamphlets or tendential works, but, as St. Justin Martyr said, "memoirs"; that they endeavoured to draw from accurate sources, and often had recourse to written documents. And yet some have thought that precisely because the sources were identical and the use made of them different, that therefore they could trace the definite end each was pursuing, and which must necessarily characterise and mark his ideas. Such is quite clearly the case with St. John:

[1] Cp. the careful treatment of these questions in Mgr. Batiffol's *Six Leçons sur les Évangiles.*

Clement of Alexandria had already recognised in the work a pneumatical character—that is to say, he recognised it as inspired by doctrinal preoccupations which enter into the very framework of the facts. This admission is disconcerting to those who, in order the better to refute Baur, had insisted so strongly on the simple candour of the Evangelists, and would gladly have represented them as mere reflecting mirrors. Had they been that and nothing more, St. Augustine would not have found it so difficult to harmonise their accounts when they relate the same facts and repeat the same words. Can it be said that this presents any serious danger to dogmatic proofs? Not at all, though we must allow for the rejection of certain hitherto accepted opinions, a rejection more than compensated by a clearer perception of the great fact I am endeavouring to set forth, the necessity of interpreting Scripture according to the Church.

The only real losers are the conservative Protestants. In the Gospel of St. Luke, who does not claim to be an eye-witness, we can only gain when we find that he made use of written sources, more ancient perhaps than the most ancient gospel, according to the most favourable tradition; but we cannot deny that he adopts the standpoint of the Gentiles he is addressing, and that that anxiety alone occasionally obliges him to give the facts a special setting. If our St. Matthew was written in Greek, though substantially based upon the Aramaic St. Matthew, we must not insist upon each detail and recall the idea that St. Matthew the Apostle saw it all with his own

eyes. Yet it is quite certain that this style of composition, so characteristic of the Apostles, and of which the traces are scarcely perceptible in the Synoptics, while they are so evident in St. John, is in full agreement with the teaching of the Church as that teaching was kept and developed in her breast. In St. Luke we begin to see indications of the outlines of a Gentile community, in St. John it is the divinity of Jesus that enlightens and vivifies all. They both reflect less directly the words of Jesus, as they came forth from His lips, but we are thus better aware of the way in which they were received by His disciples. We must be ready to give up the untenable. Since Jesus did not fix His teaching in writing, it was impossible that the terms of that teaching should have always been preserved for us with mathematical accuracy. Those of the evangelists are in part borrowed from the Church, and given back to the Church; she provides them and she accepts them; the writer has thought them out, but the Church recognises in his work her own ideas, which she knows to be those of Jesus. Hence it was that St. Augustine only believed the Gospel on the authority of the Church, and hence it is that in our own day, in presence of the advance of criticism, the Anglican Canon Gore has written: "It is, we may perhaps say, becoming more and more difficult to believe in the Bible without believing in the Church."[1]

It is true that some, in the name of criticism,

[1] *Lux Mundi*, p. 338 (10th Edition, 1890), Edited by Charles Gore, D.D., now Anglican Bishop of Birmingham.

believe in neither one nor the other. If what Canon Gore says is true, it is to that conclusion that Protestantism will be reduced. And never was it more clearly seen than on the publication of Harnack's celebrated book on the *Essence of Christianity*.

The essence of Christianity is, we are told, the real idea of Jesus. John did not understand it; his Logos, in fact, threw everything into confusion. Paul did not understand it; his mind was too much imbued with rabbinical learning. The Synoptics are more transparent, yet even their mind one cannot always fathom.

There you have historical criticism in full freedom, used by a scholar whose moderation in literary matters had been a subject for admiration. And in reality there is always the possibility that the ideas of a great man have not been grasped in all their fulness. Neither Plato nor Xenophon have interpreted the whole soul of Socrates. Xenophon might be taken to represent the Synoptics, and Plato his St. John. We have admitted the principle that the words and teaching of Jesus have necessarily taken a particular shade according to the brush that limned them. But it is precisely because an artist is inclined to emphasise his own personality in his work, that when several painters reproduce the same features they must have been led to do so by some objective reality. In the case we are considering, the painters are not merely the four evangelists, as our apologetical writers have shown, but it is especially the multitude of men which has fastened that teaching in its memory, and

has received a lasting impression. In this mass of men there is too little spirit of invention to exaggerate personality, and therein we have the best guarantee of the truthfulness of the portrait it has recognised. If you reject this principle, and fail to take into account its broad features, you place yourself beyond the pale of critical method as well as of the laws of the Church. And so they are reduced to drawing the portrait of a Jesus who is unhistorical —so far is He out of touch with the Church of His time—whether Jewish or Christian, of a Jesus who remained silent on the future life, of which the most insignificant rabbi that ever argued in porches of Israel must have spoken to Him.

I began by laying down as a principle the need of conformity to present dogmatic teaching, and now I am speaking of the Church contemporaneous with the New Testament, and would thus seem to be straying from the point. But I assume that the Church has never varied essentially, and now I come to a point that makes it quite clear. For Harnack by no means contends that the Church has misunderstood the fundamental dogma of the divinity of Christ. He is reduced to maintaining that it is Paul and John who have wrongly understood, and hence the Church must have rightly interpreted the documents. With a wisdom truly divine the Church has here taken a middle course, the advantages of which Protestants do not always understand. She does not pretend that all her present dogmas are in the Scriptures even in germ, if by germ be understood a definite formula which truly contains

the sense of the dogma. And in that way, she takes away from her theologians the temptation of straining the meaning of the text to find therein the dogma or its modern formula. If, occasionally, some of them give way to this temptation, it is not the Church that urges them to do so; she is free from all reproach on the subject. She is fully conscious of having neither received nor developed any dogma contrary to Scripture: in fact, it would be a moral impossibility to do so, since the documents are there to oppose it. We all know how headstrong piety is, when it imagines there is a question of rendering more glory to God by ascribing more to His nature or to His action in human affairs. Why, then, was it that the Monophysite heresy so dear to the hearts of the Eastern monks, especially in Egypt, finally failed? No doubt it struck upon the rock of tradition, but it also came into conflict with definite texts, especially with the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemani, which sets forth so clearly our Saviour's human nature. Many similar examples might be cited. I will only remind you that St. Thomas, after denying any real advance in the knowledge of Christ—because it seemed more in keeping with piety to accord Him, from the first, all conceivable knowledge—did not hesitate to retract, and to recognise in Him acquired knowledge, for fear of not fully meeting the text of St. Luke: "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men."[1]

Moreover, unless I am much mistaken the positions we occupy on this point are not so bad. From time to

[1] Luke ii. 52.

time, in intervals of sound sense, the most destructive critics allow that we are right. The controversy dates as far back as does Protestantism itself. We were particularly blamed for having admitted, contrary to the evidence of the texts, the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff and the Real Presence, together with Transubstantiation. It is well known how the older Protestants tortured the words, *tu es Petrus*, and now we find a critic, as esteemed and as independent as Holtzmann, who declares that the passage can only be understood in the Catholic sense, and gets out of the difficulty by very gratuitously giving it out to be a Judæo-Christian interpolation. The question thus becomes a literary one, and to meet it we are not less well prepared; and besides, there is the fact that the Church accepted the passage without any difficulty, to all appearances before the siege of Jerusalem. As you see, it is always the Church. As for the Eucharist, the variant readings recently discovered make no change in the essential construction of the text. Catholics understand it literally, Protestants metaphorically. Who is to settle the question except the Church, by affirming that she has always understood it literally and acted accordingly? Moreover, we have in our favour the fact that the text agrees admirably with her practice.[1]

Even if we cannot say that Protestantism is

[1] Modern critics would add, on this point, the readings of the Lewis Syriac palimpsest, again, a question of textual criticism, and the text of the Didache, but one ought first to be quite sure of the passages which allude to the Eucharist.

crushed, or nearly so, and even if we are as yet, unhappily, very far from the union of minds and hearts, no one can deny that the old doctrinal position of Protestantism has been abandoned, at all events at the principal seats of Protestant learning. Catholic teaching is no longer held to be contrary to that of Scripture; what is aimed at now, is to show that that teaching is begotten of a series of misunderstandings, of corrections, and of glosses. And since such a thing would only be possible if the Church was non-existent, the Church's existence before the end of the second century has therefore been denied. But it is indeed most wonderful that if it really be St. Irenæus—an unfortunate man, according to Harnack—who discovered the pleasing idea of the Catholic Church, he should not have hesitated to give it forth as having existed from the very first, with the succession of its chiefs, the Roman Pontiffs.

The fact is that the very moment at which the Church became fully conscious of her Catholicity is also the very moment at which she definitely fixed the Canon of Scripture: so close has ever been the bonds that binds them. This fixing of the Canon was not the result of a scientific investigation, brought to a close by a solemn decree. It was the recognition of a fact—the reception of the writings of the New Testament in the Churches—and this one fact alone suffices to demonstrate the unity that existed. Never yet has complex doctrinal unity originated in confusion of ideas, and now that comparative studies are so much in vogue, it is surely to be regretted that

nowhere has anything similar to the formation of the Catholic Church yet been cited.

We may fairly conclude, then, that when a Catholic critic firmly resolves never to read into the text anything contrary to Catholic dogma, and never to understand the text in a sense contrary to Catholic dogma, that if this act of docility is a dictate of his faith, it is at the same time in full agreement with the dictates of human prudence.

It is impossible ever to understand documents without knowing the society from which they sprang, and here we are dealing with documents coming from a society which has a fixed belief, and documents which regulate that belief. It cannot be claimed, on the authority of the documents, that the faith, to the rise of which they have contributed, or which at least they have contributed to maintain, is no longer the faith of *the* one society distinguished above all that have ever existed by its attachment to its doctrinal tradition. If the claim be made that dogmas must change, that claim cannot be made in the name of biblical criticism.

Biblical criticism may be quoted, but it cannot be made to make demands in that sense. The use that is made of it is due to force of Christian habit; and it is held to be evidence of consummate wisdom thus to make easy by compromise the transition from the ancient religion to the modern dogmas of philosophy. Compromise is excellent in the political world, but it is neither scientific nor critical. If the dogma of Christ's divinity is rejected—sometimes quite un-

ostentatiously—it is not because the dogma is not found in Scripture, nor yet because it is foreign to the faith of the early Christians; and if there is an evident distaste shown for speaking of the future life, of the immortality of the soul, of the resurrection of the body, of eternal punishment, of the glory of the Kingdom of God, it is not because of the silence of Jesus Christ on those matters. The fact is that such men reject all certitude; they are unwilling to adhere to anything; they are afraid, forsooth, of setting any limit to the intellectual advance of mankind; they are anxious to place no obstacle in the way of things that are still in the making, such as the world, the soul, and God—if, in truth, such-like things are their own makers!

We are thus, really and truly, face to face with an attempt of subjectivist philosophy to foist the purely relative upon biblical criticism, after having succeeded in impregnating with it the whole of Protestant theology. But we have no wish to fall from the heights of religion into a mere system of philosophy that knows not whither it tends. And hence it is we will not have our own good cause confused with Neo-Kantism, which has nothing whatever to do with historical criticism. Sound historical methods suggest, rather, that in our studies we should not separate what God has joined together—the Church and the Holy Scriptures. In our next lecture we shall see how the historical method can be reconciled with the respect due to defined dogma, and what attitude it may assume, especially with regard to the Old Testament.

LECTURE II

DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In our first Lecture we clearly stated our resolve to be faithful to our dogmas.

We have no wish to deny that there is progress even in religious ideas; but the almost morbid craving for progress, which is characteristic of our day, ought not to blind us to the conditions in which progress may be made, and foremost among them must be placed the solidity of our groundwork. No doubt it is quite true that "the development and perfecting of the human mind is a fact,"[1] but we can only accept such a statement with many limitations.

It is conceivable that the art of sculpture might spread, and statues be produced in ever-increasing numbers; in a certain sense that would be progress, and yet it is more than probable that the masterpieces of the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ will remain unsurpassed. We are proud of the part every man now plays in the political life of his

[1] C. Mano, "Pour la tradition," in the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, p. 40. 1902.

country, but it always appears to me that the farm-labourer who puts his voting-paper into the ballot-box at the elections, not to answer a question but merely to choose a representative, knows less of the political affairs of his country than did the citizens of Athens. Everyone can read the newspapers, but very few young men are at all concerned with the problems around which were waged the great intellectual struggles of the Middle Ages. And so I might go on. However, without raising any further difficulties, let us allow that progress is being made. Now decidedly if ever there was progress it is in the sphere of mathematical and physical science. Yet who ever dreamed of asking those sciences to give up the principles upon which they are based? Men may cease to be charmed by the verses, but they will never cease repeating that

> "Le carré de l'hypothénuse
> Est égal, si je ne m'abuse,
> À la somme des carrés
> Construits sur les deux autres côtés."

We are content with asking the sciences to develop their principles, and especially to apply them in a manner useful to the protection of life, to public health, to facilitate intercommunication, and to the general welfare. Were they to give up their first principles, the whole superstructure of science would fall to the ground.

Why, then, should more be asked when religious principles are in question? Why this craving for change so characteristic of unsettled minds? The

reason is not far to seek; it is to be found in the doctrine of the supernatural, and in that alone. Mankind is incapable of raising itself up, in any useful or practical manner, to religious truth, and is just as incapable of retaining that truth within its grasp. What it pompously terms progress, is but a relapse into uncertainty and powerlessness, consequent upon its calling principles into question instead of spreading them, and stimulating its own mind by developing them, and bettering their souls by putting those principles into practice, for therein, before all else, true progress consists. These two aspects are strikingly exemplified by the two parables of the grain of mustard-seed becoming a great tree, and of the leaven which leavened the three measures of meal.

To bear to all men the glad tidings of the Redemption is progress. But much more still remains to be done: all honour, then, to those who for that purpose leave all things, without arguing about the development of dogma. Then there is the leaven secretly doing its work in the midst of mankind. It would be no impossible task to show that the best elements of modern life are the product of Christianity, and are the result of its more or less visible influence The events of everyday life little by little work a change in society, and every social act is imbued with the religious forces which persist in the ebb and flow of human things.

Furthermore, we must admit, with Catholic theology, that over and above the spreading of

religious truth, and its penetrating into groups or into single souls, there is a development of dogma, one might say an intrinsic development of dogma, taking place. The question is at present much discussed. I propose, however, to deal with it only in so far as is necessary to defend the position I took up yesterday when I declared the revelation contained in the New Testament to be full and final.

When I say that I have no wish to deny a very real development of dogma in the Catholic Church, I cannot forget that our old theologians would have been shocked at the idea of anyone knowing more than the Apostles, and rightly so; while there can be no doubt that a member of the primitive Church would have been somewhat at a loss to answer a pointblank question as to how many hypostases there were in Jesus Christ and how many in the Blessed Trinity.

The distinction drawn between the religious value of a dogma and its philosophical development may help to solve the problem. The philosophical development is by no means negligible or to be looked down upon.

Take, for example, the dogma of the Incarnation, that Jesus Christ is one person in two natures. It was necessary to define it, for when the question was formulated, and the thinkers of the day had defined the meaning of nature and of person, to say that there were two persons in Jesus Christ was equivalent to denying that He was the Son of God, pre-existing in the form of God; while to say that He had but a

divine nature was equivalent to denying Him to be the son of David. But this definition concerning nature and person, absolutely necessary as I repeat it was after the rise of the Arian controversy, and since then become an integral part of the dogma, did not exist before the fifth century. It was a distinct gain for the human intellect, in so far as it brought about the agreement of dogma and philosophy; but from the purely religious point of view can it be said to be pure gain?

I might possibly be misunderstood were I lightly to deny it. But what I want to say is, that in its primitive form the dogma possessed its full religious value for the faithful soul. The contemplative who seeks union with Jesus Christ is content to know that He is God; the poor woman who has no clear notions of the difference between person and nature—and are poor women alone in the plight?—is not thereby impeded in her pious desires. The martyrs died for Jesus Christ, and professed His divinity without arguing about it. Of course, when the two terms are explained, none can deny the two natures without denying the divinity; but the terms must first be understood: the Eastern Jacobites are beating the air because the Syrian word *kionô* means both nature and person.

M. Auguste Sabatier made the mistake of confusing these two aspects of dogma. Of course, it is better to be united in heart with Jesus Christ, and to feel the efficacy of His words, and to realise all that religious sentiment suggests, than to reason at great length on

one's ontological relation with God. Long ago the author of the *Imitation* gave expression to a similar sentiment. But even though the first Christians had practical religious experience before dogmas were defined by the Councils, they certainly did not have it before the dogmas were laid down in the New Testament.

On the one hand there are the metaphysics of the learned with which the Gospels did not deal, and with which the Councils were concerned, and on the other there is that natural philosophy which distinguishes between God and the world, the groundwork of that faith, which recognized in Christ the Son of God become the son of David, yet pre-existing in the bosom of God as His own Son.

M. Sabatier really seems to have arbitrarily passed over from one side of the question to the other, while the truth lay in the middle. He tells us "that true religious knowledge of Christ does not consist in historically grasping the fact that He lived in Galilee and died on a Cross, that He worked miracles or ascended into heaven forty days after His death." Thus far we may agree, if mere intellectual knowledge is meant, *daemones credunt et contremiscunt*, for there is nothing distinctly religious therein, taking the word religious as indicating a relation to God beneficial to the soul.

"Nor yet," he continues, "is that religious knowledge to be found in logical and cogent reasoning on the ontological relations between Christ and God, or on the mystery of His two natures, for all that can

be debated, proved, disputed, affirmed or denied, without the 'heart'—in Pascal's sense of the word—being in any way concerned or touched."

We might allow even that; after all, hard-hearted people are to be found in this world. Moreover, those who deny, are not taken into consideration, while those who affirm [1] may themselves be devoid of charity. However, let us proceed: "True religious knowledge of Christ is to have felt within one's self—in spite of ignorance, nay, even of doubt, regarding the metaphysical and mysterious dignity of His being—to have felt the reality of the moral power of His word, bringing peace to sinners, freedom to captives, health to the sick, revealing the fatherly heart of God to the heart of His unhappy or wandering children." The very least one can say of this weak phrase is that it is beside the question. Such religious sentiments point to God, and not at all to the true religious knowledge of the Christ of M. Sabatier, for religion is only concerned with God. "If you only think of it, there were no dogmas of Councils to precede and produce in the beginning this first experience of piety undergone by the humble women, the peasants and fishermen of Galilee who followed Christ: it was this religious experience, this heartfelt trust which preceded and produced all Christian dogmas." [2] It

[1] But what do they really affirm? "All that," we are told; and what further? "The ontological relations with God. . . ." But how can anyone indulge in affirmation or negation concerning such a vague point?

[2] *Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion*, p. 380 *seq.*

surely calls for little erudition to know that the Gospel story is anterior to the Councils; but heart-felt trust in Christ would never have given rise to the dogma of two natures, had not that trust been based upon the divinity of Christ recognized by the first generation of Christians.

It is this union of humanity to God in Christ that I have called the final and immutable revelation, comprising, with the other dogmas which accompany or flow from it, the whole of religion, with its full value for the soul that accepts the gift of God. Revelation develops as it comes into contact with philosophy, and when the Church has fixed the terms of agreement, there can be no going back to take up an uncertain position, which would be an insult to the wisdom of the Church guided by the Holy Spirit, and an act of infidelity.

We have not wandered as far from our main point as might appear: our object has been to make quite clear what we meant by saying that revelation was final without thereby excluding the progress of dogma. As Catholics we accept dogma and all the formulas with which the authority of the Church has clothed it; as exegetical scholars it is our endeavour to grasp dogma in its full historical meaning. And so we shall progress, without running counter to any philosophical advance, at the same time having our own distinct aim, our own distinct methods.

But wherein will this progress consist? In using to their fullest extent all the resources of the present day to acquire a fuller knowledge of revelation—and

since it is to our own day that is due the marvellous progress made by historical studies—we want to introduce historical methods into the study of the Bible, as the Middle Ages incorporated in theology the principles alike of faith and of philosophy.

At first sight it seems to be quite right to do so: every age has its own work, and everything should subserve the glory of God. And it will doubtless put an end to our controversies. Yet clouds have overcast the sky: nay, more, two hostile parties are said to have been formed: theologians against exegetical scholars. The sooner this false idea is got rid of the better it will be.

Theologians are in possession. The point from which their philosophical deductions start is the dogma of the Church, as taught by the Church to the faithful. We take it as it is, they say, without fear of error, for the Church cannot err in teaching it. Since the close of the Middle Ages, philosophers have been accusing us of binding up dogma with a questionable school of philosophy, Aristotelian in its main lines. Are exegetes going to attack us now from the other side, by unsettling the very groundwork of dogma? Theologians may be left to hold their own against philosophers: it is their own concern, and we may rest assured of their success. We wish, however, to reassure them of our own intentions. We are not seeking to unsettle dogma, but we are anxious to study the history of dogma with our own historical methods: on this point there may have been a little misunderstanding.

What disagreement there is comes from the different aims of the theologian and the historian. The theologian seeks light, full light; he is ever calling for more light. Simple catechetical statements of revealed truth may satisfy others, he plunges deeper into the principles of faith with the help of other revealed truths, or by seeking analogies in the natural order which will enable him the better to grasp the terms in which it is expressed, or, again, by analyzing the terms themselves. He is the first to recognize the development of dogma, but what he fails to grasp is, why the knowledge of the fully-developed doctrine should not be made use of to the better understanding of the doctrine in its embryonic or primitive stage. Such a course, in his eyes, is little short of a sin against the light, for one cannot have too much light to see by.

On the other hand, the historian would reply that such was not his aim; that he wished to know, not all that dogma comprises at the present day, but what it included at a given epoch. As for himself, he would not refuse to use the light cast by the theologian, but that, as he was anxious to know what could be seen in that chamber a thousand years ago, he proposed to let down the blinds, as they were down then, and so to realize what could be made out. Present-day light will be of further use in showing clearly how that has sprung from this, and thus prove that this contained that; yet although we may realize the fact in the light of to-day, it does not follow that it could have been thought of in the past; and what we are really seeking

is the amount of light shed by a particular opinion at a given period.

To make this distinction quite clear, it may be well to give a definite example: such, for instance, as is furnished by the attacks made by Père Fontaine upon my friend and colleague Père Rose. I am sure I shall not be suspected of partiality—and, moreover, it is not a case of merely playing with words—for Père Fontaine himself returns to the charge in his second volume of *Les Infiltrations*. I may even go so far as to say that I am as much struck as he has been by the errors into which Kantian principles have led not a few priests and laymen, and I disapprove, as strongly as he does, expressions such as have been used by M. Hébert and M. Lechartier; but what I am not always able to follow is the purpose for which he will persist in treating with almost the same severity such regrettable excesses, and the moderate use made of historical criticism. I do not wish to be in any way personal, but as a literary phenomenon he would seem to be just the opposite extreme to M. Taine. As a historian Taine failed at times through a tendency to exaggeration, but his work stands as a whole, because in writing history he grouped his facts; as a philosopher, as you are aware, he never rose above phenomena. It is just the opposite in Père Fontaine's case, for while I rejoice at the scattering of the clouds of Kantism by his vigorous common-sense, I fail to recognize in him a sufficiently keen sense of the relativity of literary and historical statements.

Take, for instance, his statement of the objection

raised by some theological writers against the use of historical criticism: "A little reflection must clearly show that in tracing the history of a dogma it is essential that its ultimate development should be kept in view. It ought first to be studied in its fully expanded form, in its own individual character; after this has been carefully done, it becomes possible to follow up, with greater safety, the different stages through which it has passed."[1] There may be "greater safety," though even to that one might demur. Such a method is a complete guarantee of orthodoxy, but it renders its followers incapable of ever grasping the successive shades through which a dogma may pass. In itself the method may be excellent; nor are the words cited open to criticism, and yet the writer's own work practically demonstrates the difficulties to which it may easily lead; for if you take as your starting-point a stage in which development is complete, and is fixed by formulas, you are led to estimate by those formulas a state of affairs with which they are out of harmony. We may take for example the adorable person of Christ. He is the true Son of God by nature, therefore He is not His Son by adoption, even in His human nature. For us who distinguish between the two natures, that is clear enough. Now, Père Fontaine presents this dilemma to the Jews: "Do you admit the Messias to be the Son of God by nature or by adoption? Choose, but be careful, for if you say He is His Son by adoption, you deny that He is His Son by nature." Or, to use his own words: "The author of

[1] *Les Infiltrations*, p. 107.

the *Études Évangéliques* has discovered a purely adoptive sonship which limits the being of Christ to purely human proportions." What is meant, then, is an adoptive sonship, *purely* adoptive, that is, taken in the strictest theological sense, and that, in point of fact, it *limits* the being of Christ. Now for these two concepts to exclude and limit each other, it is necessary that they should first be grasped. The Jew would be entitled to reply that he had not gone into the question. The Prophets announce to him a Messias who is to be Son of God. If we suppose this was then understood of sonship by adoption, such a meaning would in nowise involve limitation. It would imply *that* at least, and possibly the title Son of God might cover still more. Now that is just what was not clear to all in the then state of theology. Père Fontaine continues: "The angel and the Heavenly Father used expressions such as to lead to the belief in a purely human Messiahship, in an adoptive sonship, the negation of real sonship. In a word, they spoke the language of Arianism."[1] As you can see for yourselves, all this is typical of the same state of mind. Given the statement of sonship by nature, if you affirm merely adoptive sonship, you consequently deny true sonship. But in those days there was no such necessary opposition. The Father spoke as was fitting to prepare the way for fuller understanding. Had He spoken like an Arian—if such a blasphemous statement be allowed—no one would have understood anything about it until the third century after Christ;

[1] *Loc. laud.*, p. 109.

and, moreover, does not the very idea of making any comparison between the words of the text and those of Arianism point to a lack of the historical sense in the author? Why, the Logos of Arius, that great created demiurge, would have been sufficient to trouble the brains of all the doctors of Israel!

Then we are referred to physiology: "It is thus, I suppose, that the physiologist studies an organism in the animal kingdom subjected to his investigation. His first care is to study the organism in its full and perfect development, before going over the successive stages which have been, as it were, nature's trials and preparations for its final constitution."[1]

The passage smacks of evolution—though it is not quite clear whether the reference is to the evolution of species or to embryology. However, let us take the classical comparison of dogma to the acorn. We suppose a scientist to show an acorn to a savage who has never seen one before. "My good man," says he, "you will notice that this acorn has leaves!" The ignorant savage is struck with wonder. "Of course, you will deny it, but you are wrong, for one day it will have leaves!" Now, that is exactly the type of argument set before us. Naturally, in defining an acorn we cannot give up what we know from the facts which follow, namely, that potentially it has branches and leaves, though at present it has neither branches nor leaves: and, similarly, when we carefully weigh the words of the Old Testament relating to the Son of God, we no longer have the right to deny that they

[1] p. 108.

applied to one who is by nature the Son of God, although, in those days, it might have been categorically denied that the words in themselves bore that meaning, taken in their historical setting. Now what particularly concerns history is precisely the sense in which those words must have been understood. The apparently contradictory statements, "there are leaves in the acorn," "there are no leaves in the acorn," would make an old scholastic smile; there are none *actu, concedo, in potentia, nego.* Now the historian is like the artist—he likes to draw, successively, with their several definite outlines, the acorn, the young oak, and the king of the forest.

But comparison is not proof, so we must go deeper. Everything depends on the character of the development. And remember that what we are principally concerned with is the Old Testament.

Now there is this fundamental difference between the Old Testament and the New, that, as we pointed out, in the New Testament, dogmatic religion has reached its final stage. No doubt there is room for further development, but there has been no new revelation, since the time of the Apostles, to add anything essential to the message of redemption. This deposit, in all its completeness, is confided to a doctrinal authority, for without an hierarchy no dogma in any way complex can remain intact. In the Old Testament it was just the opposite, dogma developed in its essential elements. Of course, there, too, was a groundwork, the revelation of God's existence, which was the permanent basis of subsequent progress, and to that must be added the

belief, revealed or transmitted, in an original fall, which pointed to the pressing need in which man stood of the help of God. But on this foundation a whole building had to be erected. Edifying writers who like to find the whole of the New Testament in the Old, are fond of quoting St. Augustine's pithy saying: "The Old Testament becomes clear in the New."[1] But they fail to notice that the holy doctor added that "the New Testament was hidden in the Old." What God hides, is well hidden.

There is this essential difference between them, that the New Testament is the echo of our Christian religion, while the Old Testament recounts the successive stages through which the Jews passed before reaching the transcendent monotheism of the time of our Lord. Now, at no period of their history does their dogmatic system bind us except in so far as it is the germ of our own—so much so, that if we were to take it in its strictest literal sense, making that strict literal sense a limit, we should be running the risk of not giving sufficient weight to subsequent development.

Moreover, a second difference follows from the first. Even as dogma was as yet incomplete, so, too, the institution of the Church was barely indicated, although such indication is of the very greatest importance. In our interpretation of the Old Testament we are subject to the authority of the Church in exactly the same way as we are in our inter-

[1] "*Quemquam et in vetere novum latere, et in novo vetus patere.*" St. Augustine, *Quæst. in Exod.*, 73.

pretation of the New Testament. Whatever texts the Church has interpreted, we must interpret as she does; but, in point of fact, her interpretations, few in number even in the New Testament, are fewer still in the Old Testament; and furthermore, we may say of no dogma admitted by the Church that the New Testament proves that it was not yet revealed, whereas such may well be the case in the Old Testament. Franzelin himself, whose authority has been invoked, has no hesitation in concluding that a distinction must be made between the indications of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity contained in the Old Testament and the actual revelation of that dogma. If it did not belong to the common belief of Israel, it was not clearly set forth, and Israel could, with a safe conscience, deny it.[1]

Such a supply of spiritual food scarcely satisfies the longing of some Christians; we have no wish to prevent light being thrown upon the old documents by the new, or admiration at God's wisdom in so gently tempering the light, but care should be taken to gauge exactly the degree of light available, and this we really can do by study of the documents.

Recourse has been had to some indefinable kind of infallible Synagogue. A certain number of theologians have accepted the theory, I know, though it is of

[1] "Longe diversae sunt quaestiones, utrum doctrina de distinctione divinarum personarum in Scripturis veteris Testamenti contineatur, et utrum doctrina eadem in veteri Testamento jam sufficienter fuerit proposita, ita ut ad communem fidem populi Israel pertineret. Hoc alterum utique negandum est." FRANZELIN, *De Deo Trino*, p. 97, 2nd Edition, Rome, 1874.

recent introduction into theology. It was used in the interests of the dogma of Papal Infallibility, in order to make it appear in the Old Testament. Truth stands in no need of such precarious artifices. There is no one to-day who would venture to assign doctrinal infallibility to the priests of the times of Achaz or of the Seleucides. Père Fontaine, however, seems to hint at something of the kind when he says: "We must not overlook the further fact, that even before the New Covenant, the Bible text had in Jewish tradition, which was richer than is generally supposed, weighty interpretations with which the products of later rabbinism are not to be compared. Does not the Bible itself bear witness that there was, side by side with the Scriptures, an oral and traditional teaching, even as there is amongst ourselves?"

This I must deny: the case did not stand then as it stands now with us. This well-informed traditional teaching has come to us precisely from that later rabbinism, which could tell how Moses had handed down the traditions to Josue, vowel-points and all, and how it had reached the men of the Great Synagogue. It is about time these products of the imagination rejoined the story of the Great Synagogue in its resting-place of peace. Really, one is almost tempted to exclaim with St. Paul, writing to the Galatians (ii. 31): "Has Christ, then, died in vain?"

By dint of exaggerating the doctrinal importance to us of the Old Testament, by exaggerating the perfection of the faith of the Jews, the extent of their

knowledge of the Trinity and the Incarnation, such writers, without noticing it, dash themselves against the very rock they are seeking to avoid, the rock of natural development. Of course, they do not see it in that light. They insist, vigorously and unrestrainedly, upon the intensity of divine action, but they obliterate all trace of the dividing line between Judaism and Christianity. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ the religious life of mankind entered upon an entirely new phase. Judaism madly rebounded, and refused to accept such an ending of its history, because it was really not its natural ending. It is an intervention of God, who brings forth "new things." What astonished the Christians, what struck them as divine, was precisely that in Jesus the prophecies were accomplished in a manner different from any that could have been foreseen. What is really of greatest importance to us at this point is, as Père Rose has already noticed, the testimony of Christ Himself, bringing to the world the teaching which was to transform it, for if Christ had had but to form a synthesis of already current ideas, the Jews would have followed Him with docility, and to do such a work there was no need even of a prophet. He is not the last link of a chain. He is the flower which, as it were, suddenly frees itself from the plant which hid it, and when it has opened out, the plant dies.

Furthermore, we must remember that in the time of Jesus Christ the preparation was over. Troubles had worked their purifying work in men's souls, and the people were faithful to God.

Now, according to the indisputable principle laid down by St. Thomas, the Old Testament may be said to be an ever-increasing light. How, then, is it possible to maintain that in the second epoch (in the time of David) we have a direct prophecy of the incarnation of a divine person? "We see therein, moreover, that a son of David will be the Son of God, and God Himself; and in consequence of *his divine sonship* he will appear as the King and priest, *par excellence*, the spiritual spouse of souls."[1] After that, there only remains to discuss, in connection with the Psalm *Eructavit*, the states of prayer of the contemporaries of Solomon compared with those of St. Teresa. All that has nothing whatever to do with theology; here history is on its own ground, and insists on retaining the true historical background of each particular period. Certain ways of thinking, which have become almost second natures, may be disturbed, but I am quite sure that sound theologians will never disallow the claims of the reverent biblical scholar to study these shades of meaning. It is a matter of due sense of proportion.

But it is a matter of time as well, for from that single point of view the work done is much greater than is supposed by those who taunt the new school of biblical exegesis for their purely negative results. What is wanted, at the present day, is not a mere cursory exposition of the course of religious thought, following the bare outline of the Bible story: the religion of Israel has to be compared to that of its

[1] *Les Infiltrations* (quoting Scheeben), p. 88.

neighbours, and if we only look at Mesopotamia, every day is bringing new discoveries to light. Further, the religion of the Semites has to be brought into relation with that of other races. In all simplicity, I must confess that I am still far from being able to write the history of the religious development of Israel. We claim indulgence for our slowness because of the scrupulous care our work demands. It is not possible for us, as it is for free-lances, to write a history of Israel, to be superseded to-morrow, after having borne honourable witness to the wide range of its author's knowledge, or to the deep insight of certain views. A Catholic writer has a keen sense of his responsibility, not to speak of the lesser danger of the thoughtless attacks to which he is exposed. Still, I will try and point out a few general features.

The first fact to be recognized is that in the continuous story of religion, as related, for instance, by Bossuet, several links of the chain are missing. When Abraham is called by God from Chaldea to be the father of the chosen people, a new history begins. The passage in the Book of Josue accusing the forefathers of Israel of plunging into general polytheism has often been cited.[1] We must, therefore, avoid any speculations as to the transcendent character of their faith. And at this point we find valuable support in the tradition of the Fathers. St. Cyril of Alexandria, who has never been suspected of rationalism, standing forth as he did as the opponent of Nestorius and the Syrians, recognizes with a clear

[1] Jos. xxiv. 2.

critical sense the value of the passage which shows Jacob's astonishment at God's presence at Bethel. The patriarch, the Father tells us, recently converted from idolatry, had but meagre ideas about God.[1]

We must then, as critics, maintain a certain reserve as to the continuous history of religion, and we have seen that St. Cyril did not consider that the revelations with which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were favoured completely enlightened them on the attributes of the Most High God. Yet we are bound to show no less prudence when it is proposed to substitute for Bossuet's noble sketch a ready-made system, far more artificial in character, which pretends to trace the whole course of religious belief from fetichism upwards, based, no doubt, to make the *a priori* reasoning more thoroughgoing, on a supposed system of direct nature-worship not yet verified in fact. It

[1] "'*For the Lord is in this place and I knew it not.*' Surely it is worth while discovering what this can mean. Amongst the men of old, we meet with entirely inadequate ideas about God. For they imagined that God neglected the rest of the earth to concentrate Himself in some way in the one country into which He had called them, when they left their homes and went forth from the land of the Chaldeans. As the worshippers of idols had many gods before them, they assigned, so to speak, to each god his own land, that he might be venerated throughout its cities, for they thought that all the gods could not be everywhere, and that they ought not to be worshipped everywhere. So that even the blessed Patriarchs themselves, who had but recently been rescued from the worship of idols and from polytheistic errors, and had been led to adore Him, who is really and by nature God, did not believe that He was present to them everywhere, and everywhere helped them, because as yet they had only attained a low idea of God." S. Cyrilli Alexand., *Glaphyrorum in Genesim. lib.*, iv. 115. (Migne, *P.G.*, 69, col. 187.)

is probably this system, as partly expounded by W. Robertson Smith in the only existing doctrinal treatise on "The Religion of the Semites,"[1] which has here and there influenced a paper which gave rise to some uneasiness. To speak plainly, I mean the article written in the *Revue du Clergé Français* by M. Firmin, whose synthesis, of which the broad lines were there set forth, was doubtless premature, although the writer's purpose was—after his own fashion—apologetical, and many of the points to which attention was called may be taken as proved, although they were new. However that may be, the English scholar's method is almost too complete and systematic to satisfy the demands of sound criticism.

Leaving conjectures alone, we have to seek the first germs of Israel's own religion in the patriarchal age. Now the period is a fully historical one. Abraham was probably the contemporary of Ḥammurabi, King of Babylon, and is certainly not older. To-day we are being deluged with the literary productions of that ruler. We know, moreover, that from his time, and most probably for a thousand years before him, the land of Canaan was under the suzerainty of Babylon: probably its system of writing was there in use, so that its language, and with it its religious ideas, would come in. Those ideas must be studied to understand the framework into which Israel fitted. In spite of the semi-nomadic life long lived by the people of Israel, the nation was bound to feel this influence. It had to be influenced by its civilization or

[1] Edinburgh, 1889. Revised Edition, 1901.

to react against it, in either of which cases it is to our advantage to discover the reasons which determined the choice made, whether deliberately or instinctively. Suppose, for instance—though the supposition is false—that their idea of God was but the idea of their time, we should be better able to grasp it by studying the documents of the period than by having recourse to animism or totemism; nay, the very exponents of such ideas—with whom we may so far agree—hold that if the Semitic races passed through that stage, they had long since gone beyond it. But the result of giving up the idea of a very enlightened small Church, preserving the primitive transcendent concepts in all their purity, more cut off from the world than is the Carthusian, is to substitute a mere group deaf to all that takes place without, and developing primitive animism, as it were, in a closed vessel. Such a view is unhistorical; and Oriental scholars as independent as Winckler, while mercilessly laying waste Hebrew tradition, have no hesitation in casting aside an idea as narrow as the other, and just as systematic.

We have to fix, first of all, the idea the Semitic races then had of the Deity. It comprises everything, from the loftiest ideas of justice and charity to sacred prostitution of both sexes. In the remote dim distance we catch a glimpse of El, who seems to have been the one God whose name has become the common word for expressing godhead. The god is the master, the king, almost the Father, and this last and more touching idea seems especially to

characterize the least civilized tribes. Each social group has naturally its god. The breaking up of groups leads to the increase in the number of gods, as does the foundation of each city. As cities are grouped under a ruler, attempts are made to bring order into the Pantheon as well as into the Empire: this administrative monotheism, however, never had any real life. Each god had his own domain in heaven as on earth, and was closely bound up with some natural object, though the learned were well aware of the changing and undefinable character of their idea of the Deity. Of all these gods, Syria and Canaan seem to have been especially devoted to the god of rain and storms, the Baal, *par excellence*, Hadad, who could only exercise his influence over rain and storm in that he was the lord of the heavens. That is the idea that best meets the needs of the imagination, and it is still our own: for even we speak of "Heaven's decrees" when we mean "God's will." However far back we may go, the God of Israel was, at the very least, as much as that to the people of Israel. I would ask you not to be scandalized if I say "at least as much as that," for even so it is much more than many would care to allow. This God was not in any way confounded with nature, and, as I have already pointed out, the idea of the divine, to whomever it was applied, always involved the loftiest ideas of morality and justice.

But in point of fact He was much more, for in the God of Israel were none of those flaws which by a strange aberration of mind were connected with the

most sublime ideas, and being free from those flaws, He was by that very fact raised aloft above all others.

It is very striking that the old El, having become a general term for expressing godhead, and every people having given its god a proper name, the name of Yahweh, which was used by Israel only, meant "the being." For years to come the discussion of the meaning of the well-known passage of Exodus will go on; but it is impossible to arrive at anything concrete, any special quality or natural object, whether it be sun, moon, or stars. For us it is the Pure Being, for the Hebrew of old it was the mysterious Being.

Again, this Yahweh is solitary. A word has been invented to express it—monolatry: it seems quite natural and without any transcendent element that a little tribe should not have had the luxury of many gods, for in the Bible itself we find a similar case in the Moabites and their Chamos. That is quite true; but even when one god sufficed, he could not do without a consort; and the inscription of Mesa tells us of an Astar-Chamos who must have held that position in Moab. Israel never had a goddess.

The service of the god and of the goddess was no sinecure. The idol was there, a hard and imperious master, to be served, clothed, and fed. In Israel idols were prohibited. That does not mean that none were ever made. Yahweh was often represented as the calf of Hadad, the god of storm and rain, with whom He was identified, but that cultus was denounced by the prophets as contrary to tradition. Finally, for we must confine ourselves to the broad outline, Yahweh

held immoral practices in horror. Living chastely, He was most austere.

Now if all these characteristics are taken together, they are doubtless transcendent, if not in the strictly metaphysical sense, certainly in the historical sense, and for the period in which they are found.

None can deny that the life of a semi-nomadic race was favourable to such simple ideas, to such a stern form of worship. Such a natural harmony of facts does not necessarily exclude divine providence. And we may add that this exception cannot be fully explained apart from the special help of God; and His intervention stands out the more clearly in the triumph of this simple worship over the exciting and wonderful rites of a more refined civilization. And I am convinced that the idea of God I have just sketched is not the result attained by Israel, but its starting-point, its own treasure previous to coming in contact with the worships of Canaan and Assyria.

How far does it resemble metaphysical monotheism? it may be asked. It is not easy to assign a religious phenomenon its proper place among philosophical systems. They had but one God to whom was attributed all that men then attributed to the Deity—particularly the overlordship of the world, the making of the world and of man. He was a good father to the nation, a just king, who rewards good and punishes evil, who exercises justice even outside his people. The existence of other gods was not denied: they existed at least in the idols and worship—a social fact patent to all; but whatever may have been

thought of their nature, they were known to be far inferior.

Such is the traditional teaching, not introduced by the Prophets, but maintained by them as the teaching of old. The idea of God was already most moral, and I have always protested against that useless invention, "the moral monotheism of the Prophets." Now, while the Prophets were fighting the battle of tradition they were also developing it. The idea of God was not becoming more moral, but their standard of morality was growing purer, more and more like to our own, and this display of activity, unique in the annals of mankind, the Prophets set forth as divine. Here, again, the finger of God is seen. This striking intervention, unique in the breadth and superiority of its ideas, must be made to stand out in all the fulness of its meaning, together with the utter hopelessness which makes those noble souls expect all from the future and the promise of a Saviour, marked out by various characteristic glorious traits, who, by His sufferings, is to redeem from sin. All that indicates a period as clearly distinct from the previous period as that which followed the return from Captivity, and marked the final triumph of the Law, and then of the priesthood.

In this last stage there can be no mistaking the monotheism, which is as pure as could be wished for. One might almost say too pure, for by continually distinguishing God from the world, He is put away and set aside; He becomes a mere abstraction; His fatherhood is forgotten. He is served with a most

scrupulous fidelity to minor observances, while rein is given to pride, hardness of heart, and hypocrisy; and perhaps the human race was never in so much danger of passing through the midst of the true religion without gathering the fruits thereof than in the days of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Then it was, that Jesus Christ appeared, and gave the true religion to the world by showing in the absolute God a Father more loving for all men than Yahweh had been for Israel.

I have no hesitation in saying that an attentive and critical study of history will shed more and more light upon God's supernatural influence.

There have been writers who, with more or less clearness, have given their preference to a simple system. According to them all religion is the outcome of a single germ—God's primitive revelation. Mankind, possessed of this truth, has deduced from it all the rest, without any special intervention of God by way of miracle or prophecy.

I should not wish to say anything that might characterize that intervention as arbitrary, as out of harmony with the time, troubling the minds of men, manifesting itself for the mere pleasure of self-display, touching everything, like a meddlesome child who wants to show that he is master. On the contrary, I am convinced that that intervention is kind and gentle, condescending, well-ordered, light of touch—or, as they say, "eurythmic." The history of the Old Testament is the history of a fall, and of many relapses. God's intervention by miracle and prophecy was neces-

sary, as is evident, until the time came when He determined to come Himself and establish definite work, which would continue through the institution of the Church.

Now if these broad lines are not in contradiction to the Church's own teaching, if revelation and the supernatural action of God are fully admitted, why should critics not be allowed to make use of these fixed landmarks to classify biblical documents in their historical order? Have we not occasion to repeat here with Père Fontaine: "As regards the revelation to Noah, and the revelations to the Patriarchs, I repeat that it is not their date, but their contents, that is of supreme importance." [1]

Take, for instance, the Book of Deuteronomy. It is the Law of Moses, for it is a revision of the Book of the Covenant dating from, and previous to, Moses, by the social customs it witnesses to. On the other hand, there are indications which lead us to suppose that the ancient law was revised in the time of Solomon. If that revised law is now represented in the complete Deuteronomy, by a work fired with the spirit of the Prophets, inflamed with their zeal for justice, with their pity for the poor and down-trodden, and especially with their ardent love of the God of Israel, why not recognize in it the old law, impregnated with the spirit of the Prophets, and finally codified shortly before Josias? Then all becomes clear, and our understanding of God's works increases, while the spirit of sound criticism marks progress.

[1] *Les Infiltrations*, p. 187.

Take, again, the Psalms: I have no wish to deny the part played by David in religious poetry and music. So strong a tradition must be true. But there are certain Psalms that we cannot put into the mouth of David without feeling an uneasiness in which religious sentiment is as much offended as is our critical sense. Now place those Psalms after the Captivity, and you at once fill an immense gap. Are we to say that in those days God's action was limited to keeping His people under the iron yoke of the law, and, to use St. Augustine's picturesque expression, to tightly binding the sick man so as to force him to cry for the physician's help? Even then he would have to cry out; and his cries are the Psalms. The most sublime, the most touching part of the Old Testament, that which even now, day by day, feeds our piety—you who admit the religious development of Israel, who desire, as we do, to surround the cradle of Jesus with noble souls, whom the Psalms would well become — you ascribe those Psalms in one group to the time of David, and add that in the night David left his wives to compose them by the light of the stars! Once composed, I quite understand they would not be lost; they would be the heritage of the community. But does such a course show any fidelity to St. Thomas's principle, that in the Old Testament real progress was made towards the light?

It ought, then, to be possible for literary and historical criticism to advance hand in hand. Allow them a little more time; we have no need to be anxious about the outcome, protected as we are by the authority under which we live.

LECTURE III

THE IDEA OF INSPIRATION AS FOUND IN THE BIBLE

In interpreting Holy Scripture it is our duty to follow the rules laid down by the Church. Historical criticism itself demands that in matters concerning dogmas their interpretation should be sought from the Church. Now, her *magisterium* extends over the whole Bible. There is, however, a difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament in that the revelation begun in the Old Testament attains its final perfection in the New. And hence so it is in the Old Testament more especially, covering, as it does, such vast periods of time that historical criticism will find fullest scope for action.

Now, whatever the particular dogmatic truths may be, we are ever bound to submit to the authority of the Church, and in so doing we find ourselves ever in close touch with the dogma of divine inspiration—the underlying dogma of the Holy Scriptures.

To-day I propose treating of divine inspiration; although anything like a complete didactic treatment of the subject is, of course, out of the question, for want of time.

I shall assume, then, as a divine fact set before us by a divine authority, the existence of inspiration. In all humility we accept it, and I propose that we should confine our attention more particularly to the points which historical criticism has brought into greater prominence. In general terms the Church tells us what inspiration is, and to what books it applies, but we have to determine, by reading the books themselves, the persons who may be the subjects of inspiration, its relation to the divine teaching, and the mode of teaching. It is only by examining these facts, at once human and divine, that we shall be able to discover what one may venture to call the "rules" of divine inspiration.

It is of faith that all the books contained in the Canon of the Council of Trent are inspired.[1] This we

[1] *Conc. Trid. Sess. IV., Decretum de Canonicis Scripturis*: "[Sacrosancta Synodus] orthodoxorum patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum utriusque unus Deus sit auctor, ... pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit ac veneratur. . . . Si quis autem libros ipsos integros, cum omnibus suis partibus . . . . pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit . . . . anathema sit."

Cp. *Conc. Vatic. Constit. Dogm. de fide Cath., Sess. III. Cap. II., De Revelatione*: "Qui quidem Veteris et Novi Testamenti integri cum omnibus suis partibus prout in ejusdem [Tridentini] Concilii decreto recensentur . . . . pro sacris et canonicis suscipiendi sunt. Eos vero Ecclesia pro sacris et canonicis habet, non ideo, quod sola humana industria concinnati, sua deinde auctoritate sint approbati; nec ideo dumtaxat, quod revelationem sine errore contineant, sed propterea, quod Spiritu Sancto inspirante conscripti Deum habent auctorem, atque ut tales ipsi Ecclesiae traditae sunt."

Cp. *ibid.*, Canon 4. *De Revelatione*: "Si quis sacrae Scripturae

believe, because the Church teaches it. It is the work of theologians to show that this definition is in full agreement with tradition and with the Scriptures themselves, and all must allow that their thesis is well established. There will be no further need to return to this point. We accept the dogma with all respect, nay more, with gratitude. It is a token of God's goodness in the work of salvation. There was no absolute necessity for inspiration—God is always free—but as it is a supernatural assistance to write, it well befits a supernatural order which includes revelation.

Modern Protestants no longer understand this, and there is a touch of the irony of history in their variations on the subject. There was no want of boldness in Luther's cry at Worms: "You are trying to fetter the Word of God, but you will have to let the Word pass." The Word, the pure Gospel of God, was going to triumph over the entirely human structure of scholastic theology. At the present day, Protestantism —I mean, even Conservative-Liberal Protestantism— makes inspiration part of God's ordinary providence, thereby understanding "the sum-total of God's different operations whereby He brings about that the Bible is a book attaining its purpose in the historical development of salvation." [1]

libros integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout illos Sancta Tridentina Synodus recensuit, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, aut eos divinitus inspiratos esse negaverit, anathema sit."

[1] *Geschichte und Offenbarung im Alten Testament*, von Wilhelm Lotz, p. 211. Leipzig, 1893.

According to this view, the Book of Esther, for instance, would merely be an ordinary profane work, were it not for the divine plan which determined it should form part of the Canon.

But, as we have already pointed out, Christianity is either supernatural, or it is not. There is only one divine plan, binding together the two orders, the one superior to the other. Historical development is natural, and yet, by the historical development of salvation, God invites men to partake of His glory—which is not the natural consequence of their creation.

Now if the end indicated by God, and which thus becomes the aim of man's existence, is beyond our powers, it is essential that God should intervene, in an especial manner, and lead us to attain it, and it is only "natural"—in the logical sense of the word—that for such a purpose He should use means which nature does not provide.

As regards knowledge, He does this for the individual by faith, and for the human race by revelation.

Revelation, then, comprises a teaching which makes known to man the new end assigned to him. Now it is just because this knowledge is beyond human reason, and therefore does not force its acceptance upon human reason by its clearness, except in the case of the person who receives divine light, that God will confirm this teaching by exterior signs, and in order that the sign should produce an effect, and be on the same plane as the teaching it is meant to confirm, it will transcend the normal course of things, either by

its importance and the impression produced upon men's minds by the wise grouping of circumstances, or by a miracle in the strict sense of the word. This special providence of God, these revelations and miracles cannot be seen by all men, and God has been pleased that they should be recorded in a book, since men are wont to use writing as the ordinary means of recording history. But who is to undertake the performance of this duty, unless he be incited thereto by God, and helped by Him? Just as miracles confirm revelation, so does inspiration preserve supernatural teaching, and is to us a token of God's paternal designs in the work of our salvation, or, as the men of old were wont pleasantly to say, it is a letter we receive from our Father. The letter we are to open with respect, and to read with filial submission.

Unbelievers absolutely reject our statements concerning the inspiration of the sacred books. History is brought in to bear witness to the fact that although we may have sacred books, yet we are not alone in having them, and that all ancient races believed in divine inspiration to account for the beginnings of their existence as a people. Such legends we reject, and surely it would be wrong to place more trust in biblical inspiration, which ought henceforth, they say, to be classified with other phenomena met with in the course of history.

The Babylonian king begins his campaigns assured of supernatural assistance: his triumphs had been revealed to him. And when he returns victorious, a prophecy has been accomplished. In the wonder-

ful bas-reliefs learned men have brought from Susa Ḫammurabi seems to receive his whole code of laws from the inspiration of the God Šamaš. Then when we come to the family of Abraham, or rather of Thares in Moab, Mesa speaks just like a prophet: "Camos said to me: March ! . . ." If we substitute Yahweh for Camos we have the biblical formula.

This is but a new form of the old argument, that since there are many religions, therefore there is no true religion. Here, again, there is but a word to change; you need only substitute "sacred books" for "religions."

Can it be proved from the books themselves that they are inspired by God? Can we say, as Calvin did, the Bible is *αὐτόπιστος*, that it is its own proof?[1]

In our struggle with Protestantism we refused to say so, and we may be proud of the common-sense thus shown. We are not called upon to cast away the sweet emotion we feel as we read the Gospel, the deep conviction that thus in very truth must God have spoken to us, the joy of being in the light, the spontaneous cleaving to the charm that overcomes us—for they are touches of the Holy Spirit bearing witness to Himself. But we cannot found thereon our belief in inspiration. For that light springs rather from the truth that is taught us than directly from the Holy Spirit who inspired the book, since we do not feel it in the same way throughout the whole Bible.

[1] "Sacram Scripturam esse *αὐτόπιστον* neque demonstrationi et rationibus subjici eam fas esse; quam tamen meretur apud nos certitudinem, Spiritus testimonio consequi." *Instit.*, Bk. I., ch. 7, no. 5.

As regards our rationalist critics, all we say is that our religion is true, although there are false religions, and that in like manner our Bible is inspired, in spite of the similar pretensions of other non-inspired books. However great the analogy may be, we maintain, and modern discoveries make this truth stand out the more clearly, that our Bible is incomparable, that alone, taken as a whole, it is really a light for mankind, a history of man's progress in religion, that alone of all the books laying claim to inspiration, it helps us to find God, to serve Him, and to love Him. I am convinced that in this matter historical criticism is destined to be of the very greatest service, that it will always be possible, without any exaggeration, to show the superiority of the Bible to anything that excavations bring to light. The analogies to which attention is called are surface analogies, inseparable from human nature, while the spirit is always superior; and thus it is that now, as in the days of St. Augustine, the divine character of the sacred words may be recognized.

On the other hand, we must admit that the similarity of the formulas, and occasionally of the ideas, of so-called sacred books, or of books which record divine revelations, has caused the question of inspiration to enter upon a new phase. Catholics have never taught that the Bible dropped ready-made from Heaven, and that man's share in it was confined to its transcription. The very fact that no older book was known gave it a place apart. It could be compared with nothing in the Semitic world, and as

points of similarity were sought in the entirely different Græco-Roman world it became customary to assign a divinely-revealed origin to institutions which we can now trace in the more ancient Semitic world, and to stories of which the primitive version was known to the Babylonians.

The point I wish to insist on is the conclusion that the inspired writer had drawn his account from revelation, and sometimes from direct revelation contemporaneous with inspiration, and so it came to pass, without there ever having been a dogmatic definition on the point, or even a well-marked current of theological opinion, that here and there men were found to confound revelation and inspiration, and to interpret as revealed ideas of human origin, the inspiration of which was intended not to reveal, but to preserve in writing.

Dogma was not responsible for this tendency: it sprang rather from ignorance of the subject-matter, an ignorance for which the men of old are no more to blame than we should be ourselves for not yet having crossed the Mediterranean in a balloon.

There is evidently room here for that never-ending work of theologians, who have to draw sound conclusions from dogmatic principles either by abstract reasoning, or, when that fails, by applying them to facts carefully and conscientiously considered in all their bearings. The Bible is not to be sacrificed for profane documents, but it is essential that we should study it more closely in the light of fuller knowledge from other sources.

Reasoning and observation must be combined: reason will naturally busy itself with the analysis of the concept of inspiration, the study of facts will decide in whatever concerns the aim and the manner of inspiration, points which we can only determine by experimental knowledge and deep acquaintance with the Bible. We must have recourse to the principles of faith and to psychology if we would understand what the grace of inspiration really is, what special light it communicates to the intellect, and how the will is moved. From the Church's definitions we may conclude that God's help is antecedent and not consequent, that it is an impulse, and so necessarily a light bestowed upon him, for man is no mere machine, and his will does not determine anything without a corresponding light in the intellect. Now since this help is antecedent to the whole operation, it must extend to the whole work, and consequently even to the very words: but since the sacred writer used his ordinary faculties, it impressed nothing ready-made upon the mind—not even the thoughts. On this particular point I have nothing new to say, and nothing clearer to propound.

So far reason has been working within its proper limits: it is but fitting, however, that it should show more reserve in dealing with the divine historical fact. Our guiding principle in this matter must be clear to all. It is no business of ours to decide what God must have done, or what it was fitting that He should have done; all we have to do is humbly to note whatever forms part of His work. Such questions are not

to be solved by each man according to his taste; we must be content to be guided by facts.

The demands of reason are to be taken into account as long as the question merely concerns what God may or may not inspire, and to whom it is fitting that He should betake Himself to do so. We may never affirm that God could teach error—that would be blasphemous—but we ought to be very careful about confidently concluding that a thing is fitting or unfitting. Let casuists, by all means, use probable reasons, in obscure cases, but, as straightforward critics, we will confine our attention to facts. What we want more especially is that vigorous care in reasoning characteristic of true theologians: the opinion of such men is far less to be feared than the routine of those who make theology a mere matter of professional knowledge, who are unable to bring the light of reason to bear upon what they dislike, except through prejudices begotten of the necessarily narrow outlook they allow themselves.

We must look at facts, and remember that biblical facts must overrule all our own ideas of what is fitting, all our usual ways of thought.

Let us first turn our attention to the persons who are inspired. Is it essential that an inspired writer should be an apostle, a prophet, a wonder-worker? Were we to listen to *a priori* notions of what is becoming, it would shock us if he were not a friend of God. And yet he may be an unknown writer. Such an anonymous writer, unknown in his own day, presents considerable difficulties to some men's ideas of

the Canon. They expect everything to be done in the full light of day, that a great servant of God, after duly proving his divine mission, should present himself, roll in hand, to the competent authority, and that the inspired book should be respectfully received and deposited in the sacred cedar chest. Did anything of the kind happen in the Old Testament? Some say it did: speaking for myself, I do not know; but what I do know is that nothing of the kind took place for the New Testament, and it is none the less worthy of reverence.

However, the fact that there are pseudonymous inspired books proves that a book might be anonymous. I am well aware of the importance of the point raised, but the conclusion cannot be avoided. Principles must be strictly applied, and we are not to be merely guided by the feelings of our own literary conscience, but to analyze facts in order to make them yield the conclusions they involve.

M. Vigouroux says of the Book of Wisdom[1]: "It has been attributed to Solomon, because the composer, making use of an artifice, speaks as though he were the son of David" (vii.–ix.). The work of M. Vigouroux is classical, as is also the example he alleges. In this case the proof is overwhelming, for the book is written in Greek, and even defies attempts to translate it into Hebrew. And was it not Greek scholarship that solved the problem? Now Hebrew scholarship insists on a similar conclusion in the case of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Père Condamin, S.J., who is so well

[1] *Manuel Biblique*, vol. ii. 544 (10th Edition).

known in this *Institut*, has proved the point—as had done others before him. And as M. Turmel has at length shown,[1] historical criticism calls for nothing less in the case of the Book of Daniel.

There is no need for me to insist on these demands of critical science.

I should prefer to soften their harshness and lessen their range. I should like to show how perfectly legitimate is the use of the artifice recognized by M. Vigouroux, less pleasing in name than in reality, and that without lapsing into undignified casuistry. May not such an artifice be praiseworthy and inoffensive when one is endeavouring to enter into the state of mind of a man of bygone days? No doubt the writer has to introduce the refinements of a more modern form of thought; but what is the good of criticism if it cannot detect these shades of meaning? Solomon was the type of the wise king: hence the prayer in the Book of Wisdom. He was the type of the disenchanted pleasure-seeker, and thus naturally the interpreter of the bitter disillusionment of Ecclesiastes. As regards Daniel, I prefer to wait for something more definite. M. Turmel does not allow sufficiently for the efforts made by Winckler and Hommel to discover in the Book of Daniel a real connecting link with the Persian conquest. The whole of the contents do not date from Antiochus Epiphanes; there was an earlier groundwork to which they were joined. The problem is obscure, but the right solution will no doubt avoid the shock

[1] *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, October 1902.

produced by the suggestion that the work is merely pseudepigraphical.

Moreover, we must take into account the customs of the age. It is quite certain that in the days which preceded our era the custom of adopting a literary mask was so common a form of fiction that it ceased to be a fiction at all, and no one was deceived by it. We have then an age in which instruction—usually in full accord with the Law—was conveyed under the cover of old and venerable names; is it right to stigmatize such a proceeding as contemptible forgery? The men of old, with a keen sense of delicacy, and a deeper insight into the meaning of the word, spoke of them as apocrypha, though to us it sounds almost insulting. They were books that were supposed to have been hidden, and then brought into the light of day in due time, thereby to indicate more forcibly that the old principles applied to new times. Thus was published the Revelations of Enoch; an angel reveals to Moses on Mount Sinai the whole history of the forebears of Israel (the Book of Jubilees); Moses hands down to Josue the secrets of the future (the Assumption of Moses); no less favoured were Baruch and Esdras, and many more besides—Solomon writes psalms — not to speak of many other examples probably more to the point. All critics, Catholic and Rationalist alike, agree that these books are but literary fictions. Schürer even points out that it is a form of literary production naturally to be expected after the disappearance of the prophetic ministry. However that may be, the fact remains. The Book of

the Wisdom of Solomon is there to bear witness that this form of literary work is no obstacle to inspiration, so that in the case of Daniel the same arguments must not be rejected on the pretext of the incompatibility of pseudepigraphy and inspiration.

Of course the Book of Daniel is not on the same footing as the others, since it is inspired. In point of fact, it would be easy to establish its striking superiority over the scientific nonsense of Enoch, for instance, but we do not propose to tilt at facts in the name of a wrong principle.

We have no wish to say that questions regarding authenticity serve no purpose, that we no longer care to know the name of the authors, or the time at which they lived, or that, in any case, it has no importance for the believer. On the contrary, as we saw in the case of the Gospels, it is a matter of extreme importance. At the same time, we do not forget that the fact of inspiration is not incompatible with a certain degree of literary artifice. If a book has been admitted into the Canon under an assumed wrong name, there is every reason to suppose that the real author did not make himself known. There can be, then, no objection to the bestowal of the grace of inspiration on an author unknown in his own day, as in our own.

This conclusion will prepare the way and make easy the admission that many men may have combined in the composition of an inspired book. We read in the Book of Proverbs, "These things also come from the wise men[1]"; or we may even find the

[1] Prov. xxiv. 23.

men of Ezechias collecting the parables of Solomon. In the first instance we seem to have a compiler collecting the sayings of the sages whose names were unknown to him; in the second instance we seem to have a commission appointed to rediscover the Proverbs of Solomon, as Peisistratus caused the Homeric rhapsodies to be grouped together.[1] Who was inspired? The sages, or the compiler? The first writer, or the commission? It is enough for us to know that the work we read is canonical, and is therefore inspired. And yet one occasionally meets men who are indignant and scandalized if you suggest that Moses alone did not write the Pentateuch. Do they imagine inspiration was bestowed upon the authors of the Jahvistic and Elohistic and other elements of the work? *O homo, tu quis es?* Let us argue from biblical facts, and not merely according to the light of our own narrow personal views. We must admit, on the analogy of the Book of Proverbs, that according to the bare concept of inspiration, there is nothing to prevent an anonymous editor, or one whose name has perished, compiling, under the influence of inspiration, a Pentateuch, of which all the component elements were perhaps inspired. The ancients had long ago noticed that all that was contained in the Bible could not be inspired, and they instanced the letter of the Spartiates, and, on the other hand, many of them freely ascribed the gift of inspiration to the lost books made use of by biblical writers.

The customs and usages of the East in bygone

[1] Prov. xxv. 1.

days ought, therefore, to be the standard by which we test our ideas of fitness and unfitness. Perhaps a familiar instance may make my meaning clearer. Our reason leads us to behave, in our relations with Almighty God, with at least the common courtesy of everyday life; but when we come to particular points, we are bound simply and solely by custom. If a French priest were to celebrate Holy Mass with covered head, he would be guilty of an act of grave irreverence, which could only be paralleled by celebrating in China with head uncovered. We have not the same ideas as had the ancients concerning history, morality, literary property, use of pseudonyms, borrowing — in more or less disguised form—from other books, the revision and re-editing of works. Your respect for inspired authors may make you wonder whether you are to attribute to them what to you seems improper. Do you not see that you are condemning the actions of the missionary in China?

But we must subject the historical idea of inspiration to a more searching analysis, and as we have dealt with the person inspired, let us now turn to the aim of inspiration. If we only knew the exact relation in which inspiration stood to divine teaching a great result would be achieved. No one hesitates to say that inspiration goes far beyond the limits of religious teaching, since it extends to everything, even to the words themselves, while religious teaching is not everywhere found. It would be a mistaken application of St. Augustine's principle that God does

not teach in the Bible what is not of use for salvation, to suppose that God ceases to inspire when not actually teaching a religious truth.

The consequence would be that all that is non-religious in the Bible would not be inspired. Now it is difficult to see, for instance, where lies the religious teaching of the Book of Ruth. In controversy with Protestants it has often been maintained that all dogma is not contained in Scripture, for the simple reason that the sacred writers had no intention of always teaching it; they wrote as particular circumstances demanded, sometimes to teach, but also to encourage, console, or recommend, as in the letter to Philemon; and we may add that throughout the whole Psalter, rich as it is in the loftiest religious truths, it is never the Psalmist's direct object to inculcate religious truths, since he addresses himself to God, whom he has no intention of instructing when he confesses his iniquities and asks for assistance from Him. Still less does the Psalmist teach God historical or natural truths. So that one may quite fairly ask whether the aim of inspiration really *is* instruction. That it is not its direct aim seems clearly to follow from the distinction between revelation and inspiration. The Bible contains God's teaching: the religious truths He taught were communicated by revelation, and it is not essential that revelation should coincide in point of time with inspiration. On the other hand, if, in that teaching, we take the facts not directly bearing upon our salvation, we may say that generally speaking, in

their natural and historical aspect, there was no absolute need of God's teaching them, since man's memory would have sufficed to retain them.

Inspiration leads to writing; and the aim of writing is to fix and record previously-acquired knowledge, so that the grace of inspiration has as its primary object not to teach, but to preserve the memory of revealed truths, and of the historical facts which enable the order and sequence of revelation to be understood, and that, although the aim of the sacred writer himself be to teach: the notion of inspiration being wider in range.

It follows from this first point, that the doctrine contained in an inspired book is not necessarily perfect in its literal and historical meaning. God, in wishing to preserve the memory of facts of importance in the history of man's salvation—occasionally merely of secondary importance, as in the case of the Book of Ruth—determined, perhaps, to preserve the memory of the imperfect ideas men had of the Godhead at a given stage of revelation. You remember we admitted the idea of essential progress in the Old Testament. He does not teach those imperfect ideas to us in the form in which they are expressed, nor does He desire that we should confine ourselves to them. Were we to do so, we should be making a mistake, for through His Son we have a higher knowledge of His infinite perfection; it was His wish that we should have knowledge of those ideas, the better to appreciate the need in which we stand of His light and grace. And so it is quite

possible that we may find in the Bible inferior sentiments expressed, not only by the impious, but even by such as lived in the hope of a clearer light; thus the tone of the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus is no doubt practical enough, yet often wanting in moral elevation, and lacking that exquisite delicacy which constitutes the glory of Christian virtue. The meaning has to be spiritualized in order to raise it to the Christian standard, and through its spiritual meaning the Holy Scriptures regain in our eyes their full value. And hence the Church, full of reverence as she is for the Word of God, obliges no one to read it, and all instinctively feel that they derive more profit for their souls from one chapter of the *Imitation* than from the whole Book of Leviticus.

If we consider the Spirit of God which inspired it, the Bible is the noblest of books; but its aim and object is not so lofty. God inspired the preservation of this teaching, but it is far inferior to the teaching we find throughout the Church. They are *egena elementa*, the words spoken to them of old: for us our Lord reserved more saving words. The facts speak for themselves.

Yet we must not go too far. Let us remember what we said before—reason itself, as well as faith, will bar the way when it needs must be barred. It is impossible that God should teach error. It is therefore impossible, not that the Bible, recording the words of all kinds of men, should contain no error, but that an intelligent study of the Bible should lead us to conclude that God taught error.

The fool said, "There is no God." But he was a fool. Ideas of God may appear in the Bible with every possible variety of shade and degree, from absolute negation to perfect love, but we shall not find therein a single wrong idea concerning God, or concerning any other subject that can be taken as taught by God.

The variety of expression in which religious truth is clothed, and the principle we have just laid down that the aim of inspiration is not direct teaching, but the preservation by divine authority of what we ought to know, make it clear that the teaching of the Bible, occasionally direct and evident, is very often a resultant, the complete appreciation of which is extremely difficult, and hence it is that the interpretation of the Bible is confided to the Church alone. No one has the right to say: I seek religious truth in the Bible because God inspired it to teach me, directly, without any intermediary, all the truths necessary to salvation. Such is our position as against Protestantism; we add that the Bible's principal aim is religious truth. . . . Is it not astonishing, after all, for a man to say with assurance: "I stand in need of no one. God teaches clearly. All I read, I accept as a categorical statement of the sacred writer, or rather of God, and if you find it strange, unheard-of, impossible that Sarah, at the age of ninety, should have found favour in the eyes of Pharao, King of Egypt, you blaspheme and outrage God's truthfulness." Can that whole story which God willed to be preserved be said to be above the imperfections of the religious truth of those days? Did it come more

directly from God to our souls than does the religious truth on which we look to the Church for a final decision?

Certain as the principles may be, their application remains extremely difficult. What the sacred writers teach, God teaches, and it is therefore true. But what do the sacred writers teach? They teach, we are told, what they categorically affirm! Now it has long since been pointed out that the Bible is not a mere collection of theses or categorical affirmations. There are certain forms of literary composition in which no absolute statement is made as to the reality of the facts related: they are used merely as the groundwork of a moral lesson—of this the parable is an example. Now inspiration does not change the forms of composition: each must be interpreted according to its own particular rules. It is not necessary that I should insist on this point: it has been fully accepted in the *Études* by Père Prat, and to me it seems the very best means of meeting current objections to the truthfulness of the Bible. To-day, however, I wish to look at the question from another standpoint, and consider the method of divine teaching as shown by the Bible itself.

As our starting-point we shall take the facts we have just noted.

We all agree that everything God teaches must be received with reverence, but it is quite clear that in the Bible this teaching is not to be found in ready-made statements standing in a state of splendid isolation. It is mingled with numberless stories, discussions,

poetical effusions, anecdotes, prayers, and metaphors. We all willingly admit that the inspired writer has not always the intention of giving instruction in the name of God, as is quite clear, for instance, when he prays to God for pardon of his sins; though it is none the less true that few prayers of the Bible contain such valuable teaching as does the *Miserere*. And so it is possible that there may be divine teaching, even when the sacred writer seems to make no mention of it. On the other hand, we must not be in too great a hurry to receive as a statement made by God what the writer is merely relating, without taking the trouble to indicate it as his own. If religious teaching itself is frequently a resultant whose formula the Church alone is competent to state, with still greater force does this apply to those secondary elements which only figure in Scripture to clothe the truth, or, if you prefer St. Augustine's figure, to serve as the sounding-board of the lyre. All this goes to prove that God's teaching is infinitely beyond our own, even in the method of which He makes use, and that, consequently, it is not to be judged by our standards.

Some few years ago one of my brethren, Père Lacôme, in a little book, entitled *Quelques considérations exégétiques sur le premier chapitre de la Genèse*, which was published with the fullest approval of Père Monsabre,[1] drew the exact distinction that is here needed. His theory had not the success it would have to-day, because less attention was then paid to

[1] In 1891.

such problems. I will take the liberty of quoting a few extracts: "This small nation (Israel) owed to its Prophets, and to them alone, its rise above all others. Thanks to them, their ideas were purified from errors concerning the Godhead. . . . But apart from and outside this one point, the Prophet had no call to rectify the ideas of his people, and he left them as they were: he took them as he found them, as inconsistent as are the ideas of a child, false figures of the true, radically incomplete ideas, as the ideas of men will ever be. Yet the Spirit of God gave Himself full play in the maze of our illusions, without ever adopting, to the extent of identifying Himself therewith, an erroneous opinion; He may be said to have leaned upon it, or, better, to have glided over it, even as do the rays of sunshine over a faulty mirror, or a pool of muddy water, without thereby contracting any stain."

How are such faulty statements to be reconciled with the dignity of the Holy Ghost? After all, we are concerned with a book whose author is God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is the standing difficulty. "Even granting," P. Lacôme proceeds, "that the sky spoken of in Genesis is a solid vault, which in reality it is not: can the Holy Spirit be said to have fallen into error? Our own common-sense can give the answer. When a teacher wishes to teach a child science—astronomy, for example—he proceeds step by step, not being able to convey at once the whole of his knowledge to the mind of his pupil. Before he can go forward he must have

a starting-point, and so the ideas already in the mind of the child will have to serve as the foundation of all his teaching. Those ideas are the only material to hand, the only forces wherewith to work to set the mind in motion and cause it to go forward.

"When a master has to enter into the mind of his pupil, he endeavours to discover the weird and foolish ideas it has; and when he has found them, he makes use of them to insinuate some particles of truth; and then to help him to digest the first lessons of astronomy, he goes back to the myths and gropings of old, he personifies the sun, speaks of its going forth on its daily course from its rise to its setting; but can it be fairly said that in so doing the master approved of all the illusions that fill that youthful mind? Now in the Bible the Holy Spirit is such a master, such a preacher.

"He is a teacher in the midst of the other teachers of this world; He teaches as they do and in their own way; He has a teaching of His own knowledge, of His own supernatural knowledge, and He wishes to impart it to man. . . ." Speaking of the Wisdom of God rejecting the knowledge of man, he says: "With the sole qualification of Teacher of Divine Science she came, and established her chair by the side of other chairs, in the public places and cross-roads she gathered together all the passers-by without any distinction, and to them set forth her teaching: she marked out her own definite position, and outside that position she spoke the language of the people, as all great teachers of the human race have done. And if to

man, who is all his life but a little child, she spoke in childish terms, and spelled out to him the mysteries of Heaven, we really cannot blame her for our own stammering and inconsequence, she whose teaching is so justly pure and lofty. Our own ignorance alone should be blamed."

This theory, I said, created no sensation. Yet there was a watchman on the alert. Père Brucker, in the *Études*, denounced the views as dangerous, and concluded that,[1] "Pleasing as Père Lacôme's hypothesis may at first sight appear, it seems to me fraught with ruinous consequences. . . . No wise and conscientious human teacher would act in such a way; nor would he bolster himself up on the wrong ideas of his pupil even to begin his work, and run the risk of their being mistaken for truth, or of discrediting his own lessons in advance. Still less, therefore, could the divine master, Truth Itself, make use of error, in any degree whatever, to open human intellects to His supernatural doctrine. He could only exploit (if I may be allowed the word) what is good and true in our ideas."

The theory is perhaps painted in rather dark colours. Père Lacôme had said, to lean upon, or, better, to *glide over;* Père Brucker interprets him to mean, "to bolster himself up."

Père Lacôme was particularly careful to draw a distinction between two essentially different forms of teaching, where his critic would appear to see only one form. It would be foolish for a teacher of geometry to tolerate in his pupils wrong ideas about

[1] *Études*, p. 504. 1895.

a straight line: how could he "bolster himself up" with that? But need the teacher of grammar trouble himself about the truth of the examples cited to prove the rule, and when he is teaching them how to spell the name of King Pharamond, may he not pass lightly over the obscurity of the early history of France? Even the grammar of the Academy gives as an example the lines:

> "Dames Mites disaient à leurs petits-enfants,
> Il fut un temps où la terre était ronde."

We have, however, more to appeal to than mere conjectures or the sense of what is fitting. We can appeal to biblical facts. Maldonatus himself admits as a fact that biblical writers use the Scriptures in an accommodative sense. Now that meaning is certainly not a conclusive meaning. We read in St. Matthew, speaking of the massacre of the Holy Innocents: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the Prophet, saying: 'A voice in Rama was heard, lamentations and great mourning, Rachel bewailing her children.'" According to Calmet: "This is a mere application based upon the similarity of the incidents."[1] Hence it can scarcely be a fulfilment in the true sense of the word.

Are we then to say that divine teaching may run counter to the rules of logic? It may ignore them for a given time, out of condescension, at the point at which it comes into contact with undeveloped frames of mind. And the justification thereof will

[1] In Matt. ii. 17 *seq.*

be found in the very superiority of the divine teaching. Its sphere is above the sphere of reason, and it begets conviction not by force of reason, but by authority. In the process of reasoning each proposition is an essential element, and may be truly said to be the cause of the conclusions reached. If one of the elements is erroneous, the conclusion will be wrong, and thus the use of this process postulates the absolute truth of the premisses.

Authority through faith operates in a different manner. Authority, when recognised, must be admitted, and belief follows on the statement made. The reason may be exercised as it is in the case of the motives of credibility; but it is only a scaffolding which may safely be removed, for the vault is self-supporting. And so it is in the present instance. God teaches nothing false, nor does He base Himself upon anything false as an essential element of His teaching. He is free to make use of our scientific or historical ideas merely as a means of preparing our minds, even as He might direct our ideas to a given point by a comparison or a parable.

And so St. Paul's Septuagint quotations need present no difficulty, although their meaning differs from that of the Hebrew text. Nor is it necessary to say, with St. Augustine, that the Septuagint version is inspired as well as the original text. We content ourselves with the statement that St. Paul uses a text received in his own day.

We admit that this is an *argumentum ad hominem*, and so not absolutely conclusive. But what does

that matter if the idea is sound and the Apostle inculcates it in the sense in which he understood it? Even the most conservative of scholars admit that he occasionally argued according to the opinions, nay, even the prejudices, of the Jews of his own day.

Our Lord Himself seems to have done the same in a famous instance[1]: "And concerning the dead, that they rise again, have you not read, in the Book of Moses, how in the bush God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Commentators have always been at a loss to show how the conclusion followed, for when Yahweh said, "I am the God of Abraham," He merely meant to say, in the obvious sense of the words, "I am the God Abraham adored on this earth," without in the least affirming that Abraham had been raised up; and, besides, no theologian would allow that this resurrection in the past had taken place. And yet the argument yielded a sound conclusion: it is but an example of *Midrash* exegesis. Jesus Christ introduces the idea no one had hitherto thought of, that the Living God cannot be called after the dead, unless He intends to call them to life again.

For the Jews it was conclusive, though it was not strictly based upon the text. And so Calmet, with his usual sincerity, rightly adds to the three solutions he gives: "Finally we may answer with Maldonatus, that even if the argument used by Jesus Christ is not

[1] Mark xii. 26.

in itself irrefragable, and strictly logical, it sufficed to reduce the Sadducees to silence. The Son of God knew what He had to do. And He stands out still more in confounding them by a simple answer than in crushing them by an unanswerable argument."

I give that merely as an example. The facts are familiar to those who know their Bible — in a truly practical way. M. Bacuez,[1] speaking of the teaching of Jesus Christ in general, simply says: "Such a method may seem faulty to students, whose aim is to satisfy their intelligence, and to make scientific progress." And earlier he had said: "He demands submission to His word, and His truthfulness is the ultimate reason of the beliefs He imposes and of the laws He lays down." Now if it be the case that St. Paul and our divine Saviour have argued from Holy Scripture according to the mental habits of the Jews, without seeking the exact text and without binding themselves down to its precise meaning, and that the Apostles set forth as the fulfilment of a prophecy what is merely an application based upon the similarity of the incidents, with how much more reason may they not have made use of current Jewish ideas in matters literary and scientific without seeking to rectify them? And if this course of action is not unworthy of the Author of our faith, why may we not presume that a similar course may have been adopted by other sacred writers in their exposition of divine teaching? The theological statement of the fact is not of recent origin: as is so frequently the

[1] *Manuel Biblique du N. T.*, i. p. 450.

case, the idea was stated by St. Augustine, St. Thomas moulded it, and, in his Encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, Leo XIII. has consecrated it anew. The rule is so excellent as to need no apology for its repetition.

"We have first to consider," says Leo XIII., "that the sacred writers, or, to speak more accurately, the Holy Ghost who spoke by them, did not intend to teach men these things (that is to say, the essential nature of the things of the visible universe), things in no way profitable to salvation."[1] Hence they do not seek to penetrate the secrets of nature, but rather described and dealt with things in more or less figurative language, or in terms which were commonly used at the time, and which in many instances are in daily use at this day, even by the most eminent men of science. Ordinary speech primarily and properly describes what comes under the senses; and somewhat in the same way the sacred writers—as the Angelic Doctor also reminds us—"went by what sensibly appeared,"[2] or put down what God, speaking to men, signified, in the way men could understand and were accustomed to" (*Providentissimus Deus*, § 28).

Then after a section working out the same idea, the Pope concludes that, "The principles here laid down will apply to cognate sciences, and especially to history" (§ 30).

F. Brucker accepts St. Thomas' formula, but takes it to mean that the Bible, "in relating, for instance, the

[1] St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litt.*, ii. 9, 20.

[2] St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, p. 1, q. lxx., a 1 ad 3.

formation of the firmament, the standing still of the sun, etc., speaks according to outward *appearances*, and consequently speaks *truly*, though its language is not properly *scientific*."[1]

It would be more correct to say that in such cases the Bible is neither right nor wrong. It is quite clear that the ancient writers knew no more than they appear to know. When I use similar statements, I know, like everyone else, that it is wrong, so much so that the error has become a mere figure of speech. Now, can an author who looks upon the sky as a solid vault, and who definitely states his opinion in that sense (for otherwise we should never have guessed it), be really said to express himself in a manner at once exact and true, though not strictly scientific? Is it possible in such a case to make a distinction between science and truth?

It may be objected that if the statement is not true it must be false, and then what becomes of the truthfulness of the Bible? The objection admits of a simple answer. A statement must be either true or false: but here, there is no question of a statement. Remember what St. Thomas says: the sacred writer "went by what sensibly appeared." If you confine yourself to mere appearances, you do not judge the thing in itself; and where there is no such judgement there is neither affirmation nor negation. Now it is an elementary logical fact that truth and error are only to be found in a formal act of judgement.

The Holy Father very briefly states that the same

[1] *Études*, p. 502. 1895.

criterion should be applied to history. The principle had already been expounded with admirable precision by Father Cornely, one of the most illustrious of Jesuit biblical scholars. I have already quoted Père Lacôme, and now it gives me even greater pleasure to be able to read you the admirable rules laid down by Father Cornely in his *Introductio*[1]—rules which I should prefer to read in Latin, to preserve unaltered the precision of the skilled theologian. It is difficult to see what more could be desired for historical criticism.

"What St. Augustine teaches concerning natural sciences is true also of history: *id eodem modo de historicis verum est*, the Holy Spirit speaking through the sacred writers, did not intend to teach men things in no way profitable to their salvation. . . .[2]

"Many mistakes have been made, and are still being made, because biblical scholars will not sufficiently take into account the aim and character of the Scriptures, and will treat them as though they were a heaven-sent compendium of sacred and profane history.

"The interpreter ought to pay great attention to the manner in which the sacred writers give their historical accounts. For, as St. Jerome points out, 'it is customary in Scripture for the historian to give the common opinion as generally received in his own day'; and again: 'many things are related in the Scriptures according to the opinion of the day in

[1] i. 582.

[2] St. Augustine, *De Genesi ad litt.*, ii., 9, 20.

which the facts occurred, and not according to what in reality took place (*et non juxta quod rei veritas continebat*).' This observation of the holy doctor is most important. He thus warns us not to press the words of Scripture to make them meet the present state of scientific knowledge, but to explain them in accordance with the ideas and intentions of the sacred writer. What a number of difficulties would never have been raised had all interpreters always kept St. Jerome's word of warning before them."

Would that Father Cornely's own words of wisdom received the attention they deserve. People prefer to say that St. Jerome went beyond his book, that he was not in the habit of weighing his words; and so, when Catholic tradition was studied, the Father of the Vulgate, the great scriptural scholar, the one ancient writer modern critics can least dispense with, was systematically set aside.

Father Cornely gives an example to illustrate what he means: "It would be exposing oneself, and Holy Scripture, to ridicule to conclude from the words of the Acts (ii. 5), 'Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem . . . . devout men of every nation under heaven,' that there were Americans at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost."

Really, this levity seems misplaced! Can this be a trace of Protestant influence in the one place into which it ought never to have penetrated? After all, the words are quite definite . . . . of *every* nation under heaven . . . . where will such exegesis lead us? What of the deluge, which covered *the whole face* of

the earth, and drowned *all* flesh? Yet he is not in the least startled, but quietly concludes: "Many other examples might be cited! *Innumera alia huiusmodi exempla afferri possunt.*" [1]

It means to say that historical accounts, and even those which bear the fullest token of their historical character, must not be understood in the light of the knowledge of God, who knows all things, but in the light of man's limited outlook, and, that it is quite conceivable that God should not communicate further information to the sacred writer, who knows no more than other men on a particular point, even though, in consequence, he should make use of a materially wrong expression.

Use all the arguments *ex convenientia* you like—these are facts, clear biblical facts, and easy to check. From them it follows that the sacred writers speak according to what appears to them. The theory is a traditional one. It has merely to be applied to particular cases as the needs of criticism call for it, making due allowance for the distinction between history and natural science. And it is precisely in that application of traditional principles to the results of human industry that consists the progress of theological science.

[1] *Introductio*, i. 584.

LECTURE IV

HISTORICAL CRITICISM AND SCIENCE

ST. AUGUSTINE was accustomed from time to time to revise his earlier ideas, and alone of the Fathers has left us a book of *Retractations*. His wonderful candour enabled him to recognize, better perhaps than another, that his great genius had given expression to widely-differing views on many points. If only Catholic biblical scholars had kept well in mind his great principle, so carefully analyzed by St. Thomas, that in the Bible God does not teach science, they would have spared themselves many mistakes. And yet the great African bishop himself opened wide the gates to the most extravagant confusion, when, in his widely-read *Confessions*, he declared that, by a special illumination, the inspired writer "had understood in his words, and thought out as he wrote them, all the truths we have been able to find in them, all we have as yet failed to find, all that we cannot now find, but which may yet be found therein."[1] In his

[1] "Sensit ille omnino in his verbis atque cogitavit, quum ea scribebat, quidquid hic veri petimus invenire, et quidquid non petimus, aut nondum possumus, et tamen in eis inveniri potest." *Confess.*, xii. 31.

plain, straightforward way, the great teacher admits that his view is drawn from no traditional source, but that such would be his own course of action if his words could have such a fulness of meaning. Were these words to be taken literally, there could be no historical exegesis. The thoughts of the sacred writer could then no longer be interpreted as they were, for instance, by St. Athanasius,[1] in the light of the writer's date and environment, but would be measured by the fulness of God's knowledge, in so far at least as man's mind could compass it; and thus Moses, for instance, would be held to have known, and to have hidden in his text, all the meanings it may be possible to find in it. And yet such a conclusion was practically arrived at by the nineteenth century exegesis of the first chapter of Genesis.

Our guiding principles are clear, and you know to what extent the Bible contains scientific statements, and thus you may possibly feel that in subjecting particular statements to examination I am really breaking through an open door. However that may be, we shall do well to pass through, for passing through an open door may show us how we may open other doors without breaking through.

It is unnecessary to repeat what you already know, and as I owe you some return for your attention to yesterday's dry discussion, I propose to give some attention to historical matters on the plea of reconciling the Bible and science. A brief sketch of the history of biblical criticism will serve to show the

[1] *De decret. Nic.*, § 14, no. 173.

necessity of the historical method, even in matters scientific. The Lecture may, at the same time, serve as a transition to the treatment of the thorny subject of history proper, since certain general principles may be applied to both alike. The sketch will cast some light on the position of present-day criticism: *ex historia lux.*

The earliest forms of exegesis may be said to have been creative. Such was the exegesis of the Jews in the days of our Lord; such, too, the method St. Paul borrowed from them: for it would not be paying him a compliment to suppose that he who sat at the feet of Gamaliel had forgotten the lessons he had learnt there. It was known as *Midrash*, or investigation. By its very meaning the word points to enquiry rather than exposition, or exegesis, as we say, using a Greek word. We seek to understand the text; originally they sought more than it could give, they went deeper than the written word, and by combining texts they interpreted a word by the sense it had elsewhere; when texts failed, they had recourse to allegory, which was taken as the sense intended by God in the first instance. A curious example of this occurs in St. Paul: "Speak I these things according to man? or doth not the law also say these things? For it is written in the Law of Moses: 'Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Doth God take care for oxen? Or doth He say this indeed for our sakes?" (1 Cor. ix. 8 *seq.*).

This form of exegesis naturally passed from the schools of the Scribes to the Gnostics, and to the

Fathers of the Church. One may even say that with them it was more at home, and that in their hands it was given fuller play, for the Jews could with difficulty escape the tyranny of the letter. And although they might allow a pious homily (*haggadah*), rich in edifying amplifications, their real exegesis (*halakhah*) was, relatively speaking, literal in the sense we have explained, always living, and pregnant with an ever-developing teaching.

Among the Christians, on the other hand, the Law was a dead letter; history lost its importance in the light of the Gospel. They could not be satisfied with drawing so little fruit from a book dictated by God Himself. To read the Law for edification's sake was looked upon as so much wasted time, and then how was it to be explained to the faithful assembled in the Church? Yet if God had spoken, it was for all ages. And so they threw themselves headlong into the search for spiritual meanings. The current teaching of the Church was held to be reflected in the Old Testament; nay, more, it shed light upon it and transfigured it. Filled with the Spirit of God, the Fathers find that same Spirit, and perhaps introduce It, everywhere. They have a yearning for God, and communicate their yearning to others. The Bible, with such a commentary, is, as it were, created anew, and filled with Christian sap.

The sap, however, was destined to dry up. Gnosticism gave rise to a luxuriant, incredible, paradoxical growth: some eight words of St. John sufficed to cover the world with a close network of

syzygies, and mere metaphysical terms were made fruitful. Origen himself, though he was their opponent, teems with allegories. With greater wisdom, but with less wealth of expression, the Syrian writers definitely showed the necessity of the literal meaning as a groundwork, and after that, it must be admitted, spiritual exegesis is a mere adventitious ornament, and, as is often the case, it fell just when it appeared to reach its climax. Never had the Tabernacle been so methodically, so minutely interpreted in the mystical sense as by Richard of St. Victor; and St. Thomas had already assured the final and exclusive triumph of the literal sense while St. Bonaventure was pouring forth his seraphic soul in allegories.

Sufficient attention has not been paid to the fact that the triumph of the literal sense in Christian exegesis coincides with, or, more accurately, follows, the introduction of scientific exegesis among the Jews. The great mediæval Jewish commentators, Jarchi (†1105), ben Ezra (†1168), Kimchi (†1246), distinguished for philological and literal exposition, are somewhat anterior to St. Thomas (†1274). The Church is too conservative to change suddenly. St. Thomas admits the existence of a spiritual sense, but with striking clear-sightedness he bases it upon things, and under the literal sense groups allegory, parable, and metaphor. This at once got rid of an old source of misunderstanding. For the defenders of the spiritual sense frequently triumphed in the fact that it was not necessary to take everything in the literal sense, not realizing that a metaphor has a literal sense which

must not be taken too literally. St. Thomas respects the right of the creating Spirit to teach us by things as well as by words. But if the mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit possess the secret of these lessons taught by things, and can thus give the true spiritual sense of certain passages, none other can penetrate it except by pious conjectures. Hence the more prudent did not feel authorized to make the Spirit of God speak. And so they continued to repeat the opinions of the Fathers out of respect for their authority and their holiness. Calmet still reaped a good harvest in that field. In the *Cursus* published by the German Jesuits there is scarcely anything left. Exegesis has become severely literal. To think out spiritual meanings would nowadays be considered a childish and futile occupation, and to insist upon it, a piece of intolerable presumption: the older meanings we respect, but we prefer to read them in the pages of the Fathers themselves.

And besides, without in any way wishing to belittle those who have gone before us, you cannot help feeling all that exegesis has lost in the process. The creative instinct has its own merits. So that while the Fathers will, for their own sakes, never be in want of readers, the commentators of the time of the Council of Trent are falling into oblivion to rise no more. Their works, when read at all, are read as documents relating to the controversy against Protestantism, while Cornelius a Lapide owes his continued popularity with preachers to the fact that he has embodied an admirable selection of extracts from the Fathers.

Exegesis, by concentrating its attention upon the literal sense, lost that originality which had hitherto characterized it, but it may be asked whether more than compensation has not been made for the loss, by greater accuracy in interpretation, by the scrupulous care taken to place in the clearest possible light the writer's real idea, and by more reliable scholarship? To some extent this is true, but only to some extent, for the school of literal exegesis from the time of St. Thomas to the beginning of the nineteenth century really stands isolated, a mere academic exercise. It knows little history, and still less philology. And it has lost even that practical knowledge of the ancient world and of the East which makes the writings of the Fathers such a valuable mine of information even for the historical critic. No rationalist, however smitten with the sense of the importance of the recent enormous development of human knowledge, could, without losing caste in the eyes of the learned world, decline to read and re-read his St. Jerome. But he may quite safely leave in their dusty obscurity the innumerable folios written from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century. I quote no names, lest I should hurt anyone's feelings.

That whole school of exegesis lacked light and air: it sought its information from without, and as it aimed exclusively at the literal sense, it was felt that exegesis ought to be brought into relation with the outside world: unfortunately, Greece and Rome alone were known: while in order to correlate the history of the Israelites with the story of the rulers

of Assyria and Babylon, place had to be found for Ninus and Semiramis.

To this lack of light was added a tone of mind, which Renan, if I may use one of his happy expressions, has so well termed Western *bonhomie*. It affected even the loftiest minds for all their candour. There is a Dominican tradition current amongst us that St. Thomas once left his cell on the invitation of a wag to see a flying bull: "Come and see the flying bull, brother Thomas," cried he. And as the onlookers jeered, the good man made answer, "I would rather believe there was a flying bull than imagine there could be a lying friar." The phrase is pregnant with meaning. It strikes the keynote of the whole of the isolated school of literary exegesis. At once rings out the statement, "I will never allow a lie to be ascribed to the Holy Ghost."

But who spoke of lies? What of the instances in which metaphysical impossibilities have been accepted as historical facts on the authority of a man who never meant his words to be taken in their full literal meaning? It is difficult to imagine a Syrian Father being disturbed about so little. Eastern subtleness of mind and somewhat naïve Western gravity already characterize the exegesis of St. John Chrysostom and of St. Augustine respectively; only read the controversy between St. Augustine and St. Jerome on the subject of lying. Africans always took things seriously, nay, even tragically.[1]

[1] St. Augustine was quite right as regards the question of morality, and probably also as regards the facts of the case referred to.

And yet the Oriental spirit, steeped as it was in symbolism, extended its influence even over the Bishop of Hippo: his explanation of Jacob's lie is well known; it is no longer a lie, it is a mystery. Literal exegesis had to give up any such bold manipulation of the text, and, further, was unable to make any use of the declaration that Holy Scripture contained all the meanings its texts could suggest. It was isolated, moving in a circle, taking everything in its literal sense, and by dint of perpetually insisting upon the literal sense, it came to forget that previously it had included metaphor and allegory in the literal sense; abounding in the absolute, it saw affirmations everywhere, and was not at all struck with wonder at finding itself in possession of the true and authentic history of the whole human race from the very beginning, because the race was but of recent origin, and had at first been long-lived.

Moses was a much earlier writer than any other, and well-informed, since his witnesses went back in an unbroken series to the first days of mankind. That was one of the rock-beds of Christian apologetics, and not only Bossuet, but even Pascal, takes his stand thereon: "Sem, who saw Lamech, who saw Adam, himself at least saw Abraham, and Abraham saw Jacob, who saw those who saw Moses."[1] The argument seemed unanswerable. Hence the bewilderment there was when unexpected witnesses arose from out the darkness in which they seemed for ever hidden

[1] *Pensées*, ii., art. 8.

and had to be taken into account. There were first the fossils accumulated in the various strata of the earth's crust, then there were the successive generations of men whom the inscriptions discovered in Egypt and Assyria have made to speak again. A threefold difficulty had to be faced bearing upon the Mosaic cosmogony, the history and the legislation of the people of God.

We shall confine our attention to-day to the first difficulty alone. Obviously a change had to be made; but the question arose as to how far one was justified in breaking away from exegetical tradition.

When I spoke of the obligation laid upon Catholic exegesis, of respecting Christian dogmas, and particularly of advancing nothing which might seem to challenge the dogma of inspiration, there was, I am sure, one idea uppermost in the minds of you all: "That is not enough; besides that, you are bound to cling to the traditions of the Fathers, and to respect generally-accepted opinions."

Now it is extremely rare that on a mere point of exegesis the unanimous teaching of the Fathers constitutes a *locus theologicus*. For, either they bear witness to the faith, and are unanimous in their witness — then we have a dogma; or they speak as private doctors, in which case, as private doctors, they have the first claim to consideration after the Pope, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedrâ*; but their unanimous consent is not of such frequent occurrence as certain

writers would have it who are for ever quoting "all the Fathers."[1]

On the other hand, new exegetical explanations frequently risk coming into conflict with received opinions. A good Catholic is not only bound to believe all dogmatic truths, but further, without grave temerity, he may not reject general and traditional opinions held by theologians; and we are not referring here to graver matters which approach to heresy. We are not entitled, nor yet do we wish to shake off this restraint, the necessity for which the Holy See has ever insisted upon. Let us set it forth in the very words of Pius IX., whom none will suspect in this connection of minimizing principles to ensure the preservation of a middle course between indolent cowardice and rash independence: "They must recognize," he writes to the Archbishop of Munich, "that it is not enough for Catholic scholars to accept and reverence the aforementioned dogmas of the Church, they must besides submit to the decisions of the Roman Congregations on doctrinal matters, and, further, to those points of doctrines taught by the constant general consent of Catholics as theological truths, and as being so certain that opinions contrary thereto, though not necessarily heretical, are deserving of some other theological censure."[2]

[1] Cassiodorus, *Institutiones in S. Scripturas*, i. 593: "At paucorum [illegible] sensum, ab Ecclesia [illegible] dicimus, et [illegible], explicatio habetur ex unanimi Patrum consensu."

[2] *Ep. Pii IX. Archiep. Monacensem et Frisingensem, die 21* [illegible] "[illegible] secus [illegible]

As you see, there is no question here of particular cases of exegesis, but of important points: *iis doctrinae capitibus*, not historical but doctrinal points, such as are considered everywhere and always as certain theological truths, which will rarely be the case in the interpretation of a text—so much so, that Father Hummelauer has denied that there is any exegetical tradition at all for the whole Book of Numbers, which is not one of the least important.

However that may be, the principle itself holds good, and is eminently opportune, as a moment's reflection will show. For the Church teaches us doctrine, and guides our acts and our life. Revealed truth only touches, as it were, the lofty summits, whence it shines down to light our acts. When men generally noted for their intelligence, used to sound methodical work and devoting their lives to the study of special questions, give an opinion, that opinion is worthy of every consideration. For individuals to run counter to the scientific teaching of their day would be to behave like so many street arabs playing with the points of the tramway. The position is exactly the same as regards questions of morality and truth. The consensus of theologians is the best guarantee you

satis esse, ut praefata Ecclesiae dogmata recipiant ac venerentur, verum etiam opus esse, ut se subjiciant tum decisionibus, quae ad doctrinam pertinentes a Pontificiis congregationibus proferuntur, tum iis doctrinae capitibus, quae communi et constanti Catholicorum consensu retinentur, ut theologicae veritates et conclusiones ita certae ut opiniones eisdem doctrinae capitibus adversae quanquam haereticae dici nequeant, tamen aliam theologicam merentur censuram" (Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, cxxxvi.).

could have; to put it briefly, they represent, in their own special sphere, the intellect, the work, the accumulated wisdom of bygone ages, and the contributions thereto of their own day, and, as such, have a claim on the esteem of the ordinary individual.

I mentioned the contribution of our own day. The fact that theological science advances should reassure any fears for our freedom. Theology is bound to advance. This opens up another side of the question. In proclaiming at one and the same time the unchangeableness of dogma, and the ever-increasing light in Catholicism, difficulties are met by the distinction, that, while the essence of the dogma remains unchanged, human knowledge therewith more or less connected may undergo change. Now if the usefulness of this important distinction is not to be lost, it must be applied precisely to matters about which a general opinion obtains. A generally-accepted opinion need not necessarily be identical with what is changeable in the ideas current amongst us, it may embody a revealed truth; and once that truth has been recognized as revealed—it was a dogma, or at least to-day it is a dogma, although formerly some thought themselves not obliged to believe it because they only knew it as a commonly-accepted tradition. We must, however, remember that an opinion generally accepted by all the theologians of a particular age, provided always it remained merely an opinion, and they did not expressly give it out as a dogma, may in course of time come to be recognized as erroneous. Otherwise, I repeat, the distinction

is useless, and confusion reigns supreme: every generally-accepted opinion becomes a dogma, and we are exposed to be definitely contradicted by actual facts, with the result that the insult would tell against the dogma itself.

I do not think that in thus speaking I have at all departed from the soundest theological teaching.

Now it is only too evident, that many minds will go through a very painful experience while a generally-received opinion is losing its weight, and is finally rejected as worthless. The fact is such a hard one to face, that while we theoretically grant it to be possible, we are tempted to deny the hypothesis whenever it seems to come within practical range. This struggle between thinkers and officially-formulated science is not peculiar to the Church. The annals of great discoveries and inventions is one series of accounts of the difficulties undergone by men of genius in their struggle against routine, masquerading as reason. It is easy for men to take scandal, because the Church, "with so much light," is not above mere human weaknesses. Such men forget that the Church is a very training school of reverence; that in the Church the deposit of sacred knowledge and of jurisdiction is in the same hands, thus binding those who would innovate to greater deference and prudence. They forget the immense advantages of slow but steady progress, particularly in matters not purely speculative, but intimately bound up with morality and the salvation of souls. It is sometimes thought a pity that the French Church should have seemed to know nothing

of the work of the Tübingen School; though others might rejoice that such had been the case, for it is now a thing of the past, and was admittedly a move in a wrong direction.

Ought we all to have remodelled our beliefs according to the ideas of Baur, Strauss, or Renan? Protestantism, of course, puts private judgement above and before all else. "Were God to ask me, 'Do you prefer the possession of the truth, or the right of freely seeking it?' I would reply," said Lessing, "'Father, I will wait until the world to come to possess truth; leave me private judgement in this world.'" The whole difference lies in this, that we prefer to be quite sure in matters in which private judgement is often absolutely helpless.

Once more, however, let us handle our principles with care, and jealously safeguard the rights of progress. Did the Church of the nineteenth century adopt an uncompromising attitude with regard to Science? Considering that those who are in possession are almost doomed to repeat to newcomers, "Do you imagine you know more than our forefathers, more than the whole world, more than we who are commissioned to teach, and have been repeating that for the last forty years. . . .?" can it be said that too much ill-feeling has been shown in the Church against those who threw established systems into confusion? The reproach has been made with some bitterness, not unmixed with scoffing. Much has occurred that can only be regretted. But what strikes me more than anything else, is the extreme willingness to deal

kindly with science ecclesiastics have shown, so much so, that if I may say it without disrespect, I should say that they went much too far out of their way for the sake of it: there has been too much eagerness to parade the harmony of faith with the opinions of scientists, and to introduce into exegesis the very latest professorial theory. When the relations between nineteenth century exegesis and Science come to be summed up, the faults of the former will be found to lie much more in its lack of independence, its want of a method of its own to solve problems, than in its rejection of obvious scientific results under pretext of their being contrary to the teaching of faith. This almost deferential, this ever-courteous attitude toward Science was all the more meritorious that scientists treated it with contempt, and, not unfrequently, did not even deign to disguise their intention of overthrowing the Bible with their weapons. Yet in spite of all, they were followed throughout all their changes. When the earth was shown to be of no recent formation, it was at once admitted that the six days could not be days of twenty-four hours. Geologists were then very fond of mighty cataclysms as the source of a new order of things. They seem to have been the order of the day. The calm period in which we live was supposed to follow a period of great terrestrial unsettlement: forthwith biblical scholars discovered in the first two verses of the Bible a first creation followed by a catastrophe, with a subsequent resettlement. When geologists inclined to slowly-working forces, periods were introduced for their satisfaction.

When they went into ecstasy over the quaternary flora, no wonder was aroused, for, according to Moses, the flora was anterior to the fauna. According to M. Faye, the formation of the sun took longer than our own little globe; and it was only then that the full scientific depth of Genesis was understood, for the sun was only created on the fourth day.

Still, with the best of goodwill, it is impossible to be always in complete harmony. At length geologists discovered in the very oldest strata numberless animals: that was decidedly awkward. They alleged traces of evolution: then there were threats of an immediate rupture. However, there were scholars of a more obliging turn of mind, who discovered that, according to St. Augustine, God had not created distinct species, but the germs, *semina*, the beginnings of later evolution.

Side by side with the discussion on the Mosaic cosmogony, which extended over the whole century, must be placed that which raged about the Deluge. In this instance the present state of the globe had to be taken into account: scientific facts were openly antagonistic to the popular notion of the universality of the Deluge. Increased knowledge of the earth made it increasingly difficult to find water enough to cover the highest mountains. It was sought for everywhere; and in the end recourse was had to God's omnipotent power, which had created the water actually in existence. That was unanswerable: but then a difficulty arose as to how fresh-water fish had lived in salt water, and how

sea-water fish had digested fresh water. It was replied that the explanation was quite easy: each remained in its own element, because salt water was the denser of the two. There was, however, no possibility of recourse to a miracle in dealing with a definite fact. All the animals had lived in the Ark. Now the number of known species was increasing to the proportions of a deluge in itself, and no one dared repeat quietly Origen's solution that the proportions of the Ark were *in potentia*, and could be increased at will. After a very stubborn resistance the facts had to be accepted, but without its ever having occurred to anyone to impose silence upon science in the interest of faith; and so it was admitted, in the light of facts, that the passage had been wrongly interpreted by all the Fathers—that the Deluge had not been universal, and that the Bible did not say it had.

But that was not all. Then came the turn of the philologists. It seemed to them that there would never have been time enough for the formation of languages had the Deluge swallowed up all mankind. The battle was hotly contested, and cannot be said to be yet at an end. It was easy enough to twist the passage in that sense, but then there remained the conflict with other passages of the Scriptures with the traditional symbols of faith—but, in point of fact, the arguments of the scientists were only conclusive if biblical chronology were upheld. So biblical chronology was sacrificed, and the move considered a clever one. "You say that the Deluge did not

swallow up the whole human race, because since the time of the Deluge, languages would not have had time to be formed? But have you any idea when the Deluge took place? You only know it by biblical chronology: now there is no such thing! It is a calculation based upon figures of which no inspired writer has given the total. Let us suppose that there are figures missing . . . . take the time you require, we can afford to be generous. In this instance time is of no importance."

And so, when the universality of the Deluge was defended by this school, they held that biblical chronology was non-existent. They went so far as to foster the delusion that Catholic opinion had never admitted a chronology, because it did not agree as to its limits: as though the differences of opinion, reached as the result of so much painful effort, did not suppose a common groundwork known to all.

By the side of these mighty discussions, one need hardly mention a little difficulty as to the formation of languages. Philologists insisted upon the slow and gradual differentiation of languages. The story of the Tower of Babel had appeared to everyone to suggest a sudden division. Here again the generally accepted exegesis was given up, and commentators were happy to be able to cite St. Gregory of Nyssa as having foreshadowed the conclusions of modern science.

The mere recital of these facts recalls a series of ill-assured gropings, of ephemeral triumphs, of scarcely veiled retreats, and of unwilling concession. The

science of apologetics can only be ashamed of them, for their memory must remain. M. Houtin has received no thanks for grouping these painful memories in such profusion: his book is little short of a satire. And even if the picture is not overdrawn, satire of its nature only concentrates attention on failings. There is, however, another side to be brought out, for our position is not absolutely hopeless; and if the author's view be narrowly satirical, he might well have used it at the expense of certain enemies of the Church, whom he takes pains to defend—Renan, for instance, that perfect type of the pseudo-good-natured man.

What we want is a sound general view of the whole situation. Let us keep well in mind the mistakes that have been made, that we may understand how they came to be made, and profit thereby.

Undue attachment to generally-accepted opinions is not the great obstacle, however often it may be said to be so, nor yet is it suspicious of science.

As we have just seen, on all such points the literal exegesis of the Fathers has been given up, though it should have been retained, and with it historical exegesis is closely bound up. And although what has happened is galling to our pride as Catholic biblical scholars, yet it was not brought about by the action of our predecessors in resisting science in the name of theological opinions, but it was undoubtedly due to their being too much concerned with science and its progress, and so they were too anxious to embody its theories in exegetical teaching at the

expense of the obvious meaning held by all since the time of the Fathers.

It may be that the sad episode of Galileo is responsible for this extreme prudence. The name is on every one's lips, so much so that it smacks of the dullest commonplace even to allude to it. Still, we must take it up again. In the eyes of the anti-religious press it is the death-warrant of the infallibility of the Church and of the Pope. The Church decided that the earth is stationary, and yet it moves. That is the whole question in a nutshell. Thus stated, it carries no weight with educated men who are in good faith. It is well known that the supreme authority of the Church never intervened with a formal and irreformable sentence. But it is the classical example of the generally-accepted opinion theologians have pretended to make binding on the faithful. Those who are too keenly impressed by the absolute necessity of following generally-accepted opinions, when they have really ceased to be such, would do well to ponder over this example permitted by God to teach theologians an impressive lesson of moderation. One cannot imagine without a pang the awful position of scientists made to choose between what they look upon as a scientific conclusion, and a decision, not final, but yet official, on the part of those who are rightly said to exercise the right of binding in conscience, and to compel a certain measure of submission of judgement—at the very least out of respect for the authority which expresses it. That situation lasted between a hundred and a hundred and fifty years, and possibly it is therein that is rooted

the hatred of the scientists of the eighteenth century against the Church, a hatred which bore so many sad fruits.

However that may be, the biblical scholars of the early nineteenth century took the matter as settled, and the conflict with science disappeared for ever from the history of theology.

There may, however, have been something more than mere timidity at the root of this plan of action. Unconsciously it involved a touch of rationalism. That is a mere paradox, you may be tempted to say: here is the new school of exegesis at a loss for an argument, and answering back like a child. No, not at all. Remember that rationalism, like fever, has its two stages—the patient shivers or burns. He denies all that is above reason, or invades the very realm of the supernatural. The underlying principle in both cases is the same. Reason alone is looked upon as the sole source of knowledge; or if faith be admitted, reason must go as far as faith goes. When cold Voltairian rationalism prevailed, bold rationalistic principles were accepted in certain Catholic circles. If proof be wanted we may turn to the decisions of the Church. While the Congregation of the Index felt called upon to oblige M. Bonetty to sign certain theses against traditionalism, the most severe blows given by the Court of Rome and the Sovereign Pontiff himself, fell upon the German theologians, Günther and Frohschammer. The latter had boldly asserted that all the dogmas of the Christian religion are, without exception, within the domain of natural science and

philosophy; that human reason, with mere historical training, could by its own powers attain to a perfect knowledge of dogma, if only the object of such dogmas were set before it.[1]

None can deny the boldness of the onset, like to the storming of Olympus by the giants in the eyes of contemporary agnostics. However foolish the reasoning of those teachers appears to us, they were in accordance with the spirit of their age. Reason was the only ruler of the mind, and these apologists sought to make reason demonstrate dogma. Now, without going as far as that, have there not been a number of apologists who, seeing the attacks made upon religion in the name of science, have exaggerated the resources of the science that dominated the life of the nineteenth century, and considered it a piece of sound tactics to show that science bore witness to faith? What a triumph, forsooth, for faith, if Moses were shown to have been ahead of Ampère!

To-day we have reached the period of exhaustion after the fever: some are perhaps touched by the reaction of traditionalism and subjectivism, and they bring

[1] "Ex his omnibus patet, alienam omnino esse a Catholicae Ecclesiae doctrina sententiam, qua idem Froschammer asserere non dubitat, omnia indiscriminatim christianae religionis dogmata esse objectum naturalis scientiae seu philosophiae et humanam rationem historice tantum excultam, modo haec dogmata ipsi rationi tanquam objectum proposita fuerint, posse ex suis naturalibus viribus et principiis ad veram de omnibus etiam reconditioribus dogmatibus scientiam pervenire."—*Ex Epistola Pii PP. IX. ad Archiep. Monac et Frising. die 11 Dec. 1862.* (Denzinger, *Enchir.*, cxxxiv.)

the charge of rationalism against the intellectualism of St. Thomas himself, and make him responsible for what the Church has suffered.

In the Thomistic sense of the word, but in that sense only, historical criticism must be rationalistic, or, rather, rational. In biblical criticism, as in theology, it aims at going with reason as far as reason can go, without ever setting reason above faith. And there is quite sufficient room in textual, literary and historical criticism, for free work done in due submission.

Since the positive agreement between the Bible and science has broken down, what is to be done?

As it is, we cannot resist; we might, indeed, bend to all the demands of the scientific movement, but to bend the sacred text would be an action unworthy of our faith, and an artifice condemned by sane criticism. All honour, then, to Father Hummelauer, who—in the wake of others—emphatically pointed that out, and firmly established it by his rejection of the "*concordism*" of the day-period systems in his Commentary on Genesis.

In that case you might say it would seem evident that there is only one course open to us—to leave on one side present-day scientific discoveries and interpret the Scriptures in the light of old-fashioned science.

But would you really do so if that old-fashioned science were imperfect, insufficient, nay, absolutely wrong? If it imagines a solid vault separating the waters above from the waters below; if it looks upon the stars as little lights hanging from the vault; if

the deluvian rains pour down in torrential streams when the flood-gates of heaven are opened: if the earth is fixed in the centre of the heavens. . . . Has all that to be made part of the divine teaching? Not at all. God did not teach that. Not only did He not reveal these human conclusions from the superficial study of phenomena, but it was not His wish, that because they were in the Bible, they should be given out as coming from Him, as said by Him, as by Him dictated. Consequently, the Bible contains no scientific teaching. And when the sacred writers allude to such theories, they are guided by appearances. By appearances—of which we had occasion to speak when treating the question of inspiration in general.

In the New Testament, in which light is not less abundant than in the Old, there is not a mention of revelation in matters scientific. There was a time when, following St. Peter, it was said that the world would end by fire. There would be no eagerness at the present day to engage in controversy on this point with those who hold that—in very far distant ages -we shall all perish by cold. And, in point of fact, the most enlightened doctors, those who are painted pen in hand, writing at the dictation of the mystical dove, had no special knowledge or presentiment of the course of scientific discoveries. St. Thomas knew exactly what a great genius like himself, could learn from a scholar like Albert. No one thinks any the worse of St. Francis of Sales for his natural history similes, which are as fabulous as they are well chosen for his lofty teaching.

All this is worth considering, and if we really want to see things as they are, we ought to thank God for it. The fact is that in Christianity, religion is free from the trammels of any merely scientific element. This truth has not always been understood, and the failure to recognize it, was the great mistake made by Galileo's opponents. Whether it was, as some apologists will have it, that his condemnation was sought for because he had brought the Bible into the question, or whether his teaching was condemned in its purely scientific aspect, as seems more exact, it is quite certain, that it was then believed, that Christianity did teach a cosmology. Hence the gravity of the Galileo affair. Many hold that modern science began with Galileo, and with him religion ended, because religion cannot survive the cosmology with which it identified itself.

Does not the heaven it sets before us as our goal disappear with the crystalline sphere which encloses and gives motion to the others? Anti-religious men pretend to see in religion a mere system of cosmology. There is no method more calculated to sap religion in the minds of men of the present day, who are rightly passionate for scientific knowledge, than to set religion before them as the first scientific effort of mankind. I have no wish to advertise Guyau's entrancing but dangerous book, *l'Irréligion de l'Avenir*,[1] but that is the one principle it contains: "Religion is the birth of science; and the problems it set itself in the first instance to solve are purely

[1] Seventh Edition, p. 52.

physical." No one, of course, will take this primitive science seriously—it is merely the first effort made by the curiosity of our ancestors to express themselves. Then, it is easy to add, that the explanation of the actions of bodies by supernatural causes has given way before the proofs of natural forces; the pseudo-science of bygone days is dead, and if religion was nothing but that, it will disappear at the same time. Now it is clear that many religions, perhaps all,[1] except Christianity, are closely bound up with that network—frequently so charming—known as myth, and that all worships, except the official Christian worship, are more or less steeped in superstition or magic. Now what is a myth but a rudimentary scientific explanation in which supernatural causes take the place of natural causes, living or mechanical? And what is magic but the attempt to subject those supernatural forces to our wishes? Myth and magic, then, are clearly primitive science, striving to solve through religion the mystery of causation, and hence it is, that this science is everywhere found in the closest connection with false religions, and filling a large place in their sacred books.

But hence it is, also, that myths and magic have no place in our Sacred Books.

To suppose then, as was done, that the Bible also contained a scientific cosmology was a mistake fraught with incalculable consequences. The mistake was due to the connection with Aristotelian ideas, which had

[1] Buddhism occupies an intermediate position between Philosophy and Religion.

been so closely linked to Christian doctrine, not merely in their philosophic, but also in their scientific aspect. It was a mistake St. Augustine never made, and when he sought to know what was meant by going to Heaven, approaching the throne of God, and other like expressions, it is quite clear that his teaching was purely spiritual, and in nowise linked with a scientific conception of the world, with which possibly he agreed. He had, however, too lofty an idea of divine teaching to admit that God, who had left nothing undone to provide us with the knowledge necessary for our salvation, should have taken pains to teach us things useless for our salvation. Here we meet once more Father Lacôme's pregnant thought: that if God had really built upon the scientific knowledge of the Hebrews, He must needs have used error as His groundwork: thus mythology, the beginning of science, would be openly introduced. The alternative was to sow trouble in men's minds, by obliging His prophets to stubbornly maintain before all men that the stars were bigger than the moon, that the earth which appeared at rest was turning at a vertiginous speed. Was it not better to speak to them of this sun which rules over the day, this moon which rules over the night, this light which flashes across the horizon in an instant, these plants, fishes and animals, and man himself, all of which God has created?

When we assert that the Bible gives no scientific explanation of the world, we maintain religion on a plane from which science can never drag it down. After all, easy as it is to smile at the scientific stam-

mering of the Israelites, it is very hard to see what satisfaction science can give to the aspirations of the soul. When M. Brunetière proclaimed "the bankruptcy of Science," he never meant, I imagine, to undervalue Science as stimulating and guiding the course of material progress. He considered that Science had raised itself above what really was its true mission. It had come to look upon religion as a worn-out science, and to hold that at all events it were better that an exact science should replace an erroneous science.

The judges of Galileo never made so great a mistake as that; they merely believed that Christianity had a cosmography of its own, which naturally must be true. And it is because Catholic biblical scholars have persistently held to this path, while showing still greater deference to science, that they have manœuvred so clumsily over the ground covered by the first chapter of Genesis.

No, we must seek a solution elsewhere, and I have already pointed out in what direction. Henceforth the relations between exegesis and science, strictly so called, should be of the very simplest description; or rather scientific exegesis must absolutely give way to historical exegesis.

When I began my biblical studies I well remember the terror inspired by the programme of the course of studies, beginning with astronomy, cosmography, geology, and palæontology. All that had to be known in order to fully explain the first chapter of Genesis. Of course it all ought to be known, but known as the Jews knew it; and as all we know of their science

is contained in the Bible, biblical criticism can provide for itself. Yet even so, its domain is vast enough, and never ceases extending.

In this way, biblical criticism acquires once more the status of an independent science, with its own laws, and is able to direct its course without the need of a nautical almanack. And at the same time it returns to the obvious literal interpretation expounded by the Fathers.

Historical criticism is strongly traditional in its exposition of the literal sense. Any novelty there may be, lies in the reaction against the blunders of the nineteenth century. So the days of creation will be days of twenty-four hours, in which sense everyone, except St. Augustine, understood the passage; there is a biblical chronology; and in the account of the Deluge, the word *all* men and the *whole* earth will retain their definite natural meaning, and the dispersion at the Tower of Babel will remain the result of the confusion of tongues among the builders.

It is no slight gain to be able to give full value to the obvious meaning of the text, as it has ever been understood. Perhaps this gain may seem to you dearly bought, because the established results of science remain as they were; and if the harmony theory is no longer tenable, it is because you have to give up taking the facts in their concrete reality and penetrate beyond appearances.

Even to-day we are not all fully agreed. All allow, since the Pope has spoken, that the sacred writers may have confined themselves to appearances. This

is not against the principle of inspiration. And as the solution is obvious and easy, since it settles everything, and leaves no loophole for examples to the contrary, it is applied whenever a purely scientific truth comes into the question. I do not think that anyone would maintain that the Bible was quite exact in classifying hares with ruminant animals, or that if the hare is not a ruminant, another animal must have been meant. And yet, in questions concerning cosmogony and the Deluge, there is some hesitation as to the application of these principles, though in this the modern criticism is making rapid progress. Unless I am mistaken, the great difficulty is not natural science. If the works of the Book of Genesis had not been related in a certain order and placed in a framework of six days, no one would maintain that God created the sun at the moment (?) at which its rays were slowly able the better to make a way through the quaternary mists. To speak of order and of six days implies history.

Hence Father Hummelauer, after pleasantly criticizing the "Harmonizers," imagines that the groundwork of this order and of this number should be placed in imaginary visions—so imaginary, in fact, that there we are left.

The real difficulty arises from another source: not from science any longer, but from history. We must reserve the discussion of this point for the next Lecture.

LECTURE V

HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE CIVIL LAWS OF THE ISRAELITES

HISTORICAL biblical criticism has frequently been blamed for its alleged tendency to naturalism. A study of the successive phases through which biblical criticism has passed on the subject of the Mosaic legislation will give us a good opportunity of testing the worth of this accusation. What did the ancients think of these laws? What do the moderns think? The answer to these questions will enable us to see exactly how the very method of study applied demanded a change in the conclusion arrived at. The Code of Ḥammurabi will serve as a very useful point of comparison.

To fully realize the impression produced upon the Fathers by the Law of Moses, we have to remember that the first Eastern Christians were more or less under the influence of Greek civilization, the Doctors of the Church more so than the ordinary faithful; and that all enjoyed the benefits of the "*Pax Romana*," and not even the persecutions themselves could lessen the esteem in which they held an administrative

system which, under Constantine, became almost a benevolent guardianship. Old Semitic customs had everywhere given way before the charm of Greece or the domination of Rome; old legal monuments had disappeared. When they studied the Law of Moses, it was its divine character which generally, and rightly, attracted their attention. Monotheism was its keystone; yet even that does not express its full importance, for everything it contained converged towards the One God. For the most part it consisted of ritual and ceremonial laws, so that the civil legislation itself formed but part of a great whole in which God shone forth.

Remember, too, that many of the Fathers held a theory of inspiration of Scripture very closely akin to revelation; and that revelation seemed to be suggested on every page of the Pentateuch, whereon it was written that "God said to Moses" and that even the civil legislation, contained in what we now term the *Book of the Covenant* (Exod. xxi.–xxiii. 19), opened with the words, "These are the judgements which thou shalt set before them" (Exod. xxi. 1).

In this light, the tone of mind of an Origen becomes less unintelligible. None can enter into the mind of this great genius, unless he first recognizes in him that rare combination of an ever-active reason, and a faith sincerely fond of mystery. He seeks, reasons, discusses; and yet, all the time, he is a mystic whom no ordinary idea will satisfy, and who savours only things divine. So that in his eyes the Law comes from God, the whole of it was dictated by Him, created by Him for

His people; hence he will insist on its being full of sublime thoughts, lofty teachings, of food for contemplation. But when he brings the frigid learning of the Greek to bear upon it, and compares it with Roman law, a product of man's reason, the very embodiment of practical reason, he finds in God's Law precepts which seem to him vulgar, inferior to those which reason had framed, and certainly unworthy of souls enlightened by Christ. The only means he could devise to get rid of this striking contradiction was the statement that the Law must not always be taken literally.

"When we come to the Law of Moses," he declared, "we find therein many regulations which, if taken as they stand, prescribe absurdities or impossibilities. If we had to retain the literal sense, and interpret the legal prescriptions as they are understood by the Jews and by ordinary minds, I should blush to think that God had given such laws. For then the laws of men, those, for instance, of Rome, of Athens, or of Sparta, would appear nobler and more reasonable."[1] And again: "Unless we take all these in a sense different from the literal meaning of the text, it would constitute an obstacle to Christianity rather than a source of edification."[2]

Some have said that Origen was a rationalist because he spoke in that way, and clearly showed the impossibility of understanding the primitive accounts in the ordinary historical sense. Never since his time down to our own day has human reason brought such

[1] *Periarchon*, iv. 17. [2] *In Lev.* hom. v. i.

keen criticism to bear upon the Bible. And yet, as you see, he does not blame the Bible or its Divine Author; on the contrary, he wishes the divine element to shine forth the more. Rather than take away anything from the action of God, rather than reduce it to approbation or toleration of existing customs, he exaggerates the extent of divine suggestion.

Since all the ideas it contains are divine, he is anxious that they should be worthy of God; and since their literal meaning is vulgar, he refuses to allow it to be God's meaning, and takes refuge in allegory. Origen's mistake was his exaggeration of God's innovating influence in the civil legislation of the Hebrews. He clearly supposes that the Hebrews as a people do not exist; they are to come into being as the people of God. God, from highest heaven, reveals to them the customs He destines for them in that capacity, and Origen is filled with wonder at finding them occasionally inferior to the practical organization of the Romans. This discovery he made by the use of his reason; and though in reality it was right, he sets aside its conclusions. Certainly by its polygamy the Hebrew race was inferior to the Greeks and Romans, to whose honour be it said, that they always upheld the unity of marriage, and amongst whom divorce, though allowed, it is true, was considered as falling short of the old-fashioned standard of morals.

So the teacher of Alexandria and Cæsarea was not at fault when he called attention to those blemishes.

But allegory was useless as a remedy, it was merely beating the air, and everyone felt that it was so. They rightly refused to follow Origen along this path, but contenting themselves with a mere palliative, they strove to weaken the force of the reproaches levelled at the old law, and to raise it higher still. And so we have seen Mgr. Freppel still maintaining that the distinction between pure and impure foods was an excellent hygienic measure, and that by it God had shown His care for the health of His people. In spite of all that, however, there still remained difficulties. As the worthy Dom Calmet did not wish to give up the perfection of the Law of Moses, considering it as coming directly from God, he found himself reduced to supposing the existence of enigmatic meanings—in other words, he practically admitted himself at a loss for an explanation. The laws of a nation hardly deserve the name if they are hidden in deliberately obscure phrases. His words are to the effect that "this same Majesty sometimes so abases itself as to make regulations which, considered apart and by themselves, really do not seem to deserve a place in His laws; but the commands which, under this aspect, do not appear worthy of God, go to make up with the other laws the most *logical* and the greatest body of precepts ever given to men. There are many of these laws whose apparent meanness shocks us; but they must not be taken literally, nor according to the sense which first presents itself to the mind; they have a secret, an enigmatic meaning, hidden by the wisdom of the Legislator so as not to

dilate too clearly on certain disorders which He forbade."[1]

Now, Bible readers are well aware that it never hesitates to speak of things as they are. So it is quite evident we have advanced but little since the time of Origen. During the period which I have called the creative period, the genius of the Fathers poured out torrents of frequently beautiful spiritual meanings; in Calmet we find less of the divine, without any deeper criticism; he is satisfied with platitudes on the perfection of the Law of Moses, and ends up with enigmas. How has this come to pass? The reason simply is that God was always supposed to have personally originated those orders and commands, and, as is only right, men were anxious not to attribute anything imperfect to Him.

And here we must have recourse to what has been wrongly called Naturalism, but really is only a deeper appreciation of God's action. The idea of those who look upon a people as a kind of *tabula rasa*, and do not take into account its traditions, its customs, its intellectual and moral growth, its social grouping, who make laws for man in the abstract, and treat that being of mere flesh and blood as a reasonable being—that idea, I say, is simply the Jacobinism of the French Revolution.

The soldier of genius who laid the foundation of our present military constitution saw the need of going back; and thus Roman Law, and especially our

[1] Preface to the Book of Exodus, *Commentaire Littéral*, i. 353 (Paris, 1724).

old customs, as commented by Pothier, occupy a large place in the Napoleonic Code. Writers are fond of repeating that God only gave His people such laws as befitted them; but they do not add that, consequently, these laws must have been theirs already, since it is never opportune for a nation suddenly to leave its own traditional paths; and moreover, God does not act in that headstrong manner.

Some of the Fathers had already remarked this, and the tradition had not quite died away in Calmet's time. Their standpoint, however, was misleading in that they attributed too great a measure of influence to the Egyptians.[1] A gentle and almost effeminate race such as they were, could scarcely pretend to engraft its customs on the stubborn Semites, so notoriously refractory to the influence of their environment. The customs then had to be sought among the Semites themselves, but where to find them, it was difficult to say. Father Hummelauer here again had the merit of having raised his voice against the idea of a law coming down from Heaven, like the scrolls coming from the mouths of mediæval saints. Can anyone imagine, he asks, the Most High and Good God coming down from Heaven to teach Moses to pierce the ear of a slave who refuses his liberty after six years? And if we attribute to God the origin of the religious rites, particularly in matters of minor detail, it is, surely, petty in the extreme and unworthy of Him.[2]

[1] *Cf.* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.*, vii. 8.

[2] "Qui si a Deo primo invecti esse adstruuntur sapiunt nescio quid angusti Deoque parum digni," *Comment. in Exod.*, p. 20.

God took the customs as they were and gave them His approval; but Moses, under the influence of inspiration, may have changed and bettered them. Our commentators lost sight of the scruples felt by Origen, and always insisted upon the gentleness of the Jewish Law. As the Jewish slave after six years might claim his liberty, they were wont to point out the greater harshness of Roman law in dealing with slavery. And when Father Hummelauer wishes to find the new laws for which Moses is responsible, he selects the most humane, those made in favour of strangers, widows, orphans, and the poor.[1] Yet he only gives his opinion with due reserve, for charity does not date from the time of Moses.

On the other hand, I feel no regret for the words I wrote some years ago. "Does it follow that if Moses did not write the Torah, the whole of its contents are posterior to Moses? Better by far it would be to say that it is one or two thousand years earlier than Moses. All these customs were in part the common heritage of all Semites, and in part peculiar to nomadic or semi-nomadic Semites, were known by Moses, and by him approved in God's name."[2]

We have now in our possession a Semitic code a thousand years older than Moses. It comes from Susa, and is now in the Louvre: the Code of

[1] "Ab ipso primum Moyse videntur profectæ esse leges in favorem *advenarum*, *viduarum*, *pupillorum*, *egenorum* (xxii. 21–27) latae. Qui homines a sacerdotum aliorumque insolentia defendebantur Moysisque partibus iungebantur" (*ibid.*, p. 12; *cp.* p. 23).

[2] *Revue Biblique*, 1901, p. 615.

Ḫammurabi. If a person is at all susceptible to what Bourget has well described as an historical sensation, he cannot but feel the deepest emotion at the sight of that fine block of black diorite. It stands 2·25 metres high, with a circumference of from 1·9 to 1·65 metres, covered with a very faintly written inscription. And when one thinks of our paper codes, words fail to rise to our lips. Thanks to the reliable and prompt translation made by my friend and colleague, Father Scheil, we know exactly the meaning of this monument, which was only disinterred in December and January last.[1]

Let me first introduce the Chaldean monarch himself. The matter is of considerable importance to biblical criticism.

Ḫammurabi is the founder of Babylon's greatness; in other words, he must henceforth be considered one of the greatest men in history. Until his time, the cities of Chaldea were either independent of each other, or they founded great but not lasting empires. After his time, Babylon may cease to be the military capital of Mesopotamia, but it will continue to be its intellectual centre, and its influence on the ancient world has been compared to that of the Rome of the Middle Ages.

It is now almost certain that it was he who inaugurated in Babylon the reign of the great god Marduk (Merodach), whom he had brought with him from Eridu in Lower Chaldea; and to assure him the first place, he caused a whole mythological

[1] [December 1901 and January 1902.]

literature to be remodelled, if not composed, with the great epic of Gilmaneš, hitherto known under the artificial name of the epopee of Nemrod. Such a man could no more avoid remodelling the laws than could a Charlemagne or a Napoleon.

He is represented at the top of his code, in the presence of the (seated) sun-god Šamaš, for it is, he says, by order of Šamaš that justice must shine in the land. Father Scheil has entitled this bas-relief, "the god Šamaš dictating the code of laws to King Ḫammurabi."

The king is standing clothed in a pleated tunic, fastened closely round the waist by a belt; he has a chain around his neck, and on his head a small cap with fillet; he also wears a kind of artificial beard, very wide, which almost seems to come out of the cap. The right hand is raised to the lips and held in at the elbow by the left. The palms are turned inwards, to indicate, as Father Scheil pointed out to me, that exterior activity is repressed by the intense attention given entirely to the words of Šamaš.

The god is seated upon a throne, such as is frequently found on *Kudurrus* as the place of divine emblems. Upon his head is a tiara of horns, interlaced and forming layers which rise to join a half-moon. He is clothed in a flounced robe, and also wears an enormous artificial beard. Behind his shoulders two groups of rays spring out. His left hand is closed, the thumb being on the closed fist; the right hand presents to the king a sceptre, bearing a buckle in the middle,

which on Babylonian monuments is the symbol of justice. It is the rod of justice or of righteousness spoken of by the Psalmist.

The god speaks, the king listens. We are perhaps apt to think that the ancient monarchies were based upon an unrestrained despotism, which completely ignored men's rights. But let us listen to Ḫammurabi.

"The oppressed man who has a suit may come before the image of the King of Justice, may read the inscriptions and hear the precious words. The Stele will make clear unto him his suit, he will understand his cause and his heart will rejoice, saying:—'Ḫammurabi is a lord who is literally a father to his people, by the word of Marduk his lord he has created fear, the victory of Marduk in north and south has he gained, he has pleased the heart of Marduk his lord, and brought happiness to men for ever, and the land he has set in order.'"[1]

Here we may stop: the account he gave of his government—self-laudatory, as such accounts needs must be—is of interest only to complete the evidence at our disposal. The man must be judged in the light of a detailed examination of his laws; but as that would take too long a time and be too tedious a work for the lecture-room, I will refer you to the Code itself, or, if you prefer it, to the analysis given in the *Revue Biblique*.[2] The most we can do to-day is to sketch its general characteristics, compare it on some

[1] [*Cf.* Cook, *The Laws of Moses and the Code of Ḫammurabi*, p. 11 (Lond., 1903)].

[2] Jan. 1903, pp. 27–51.

points with the Laws of Moses, and thus cast some light upon the composition of the Pentateuch.

We must give the old king—he had reigned forty-two years—full credit for his good intentions in furthering the well-being of his subjects, being a father to them, assisting the weak, and particularly the widow and the orphan, to do the will of his god, and at the same time to satisfy his own kind-heartedness.

The decisions given are sound, and are grounded on ancient customs which the king could not dream of overturning: he never lays down a general principle, but is content to refer tacitly to custom, and to settle the cases actually before him. So, if we wish to understand the broad lines of his Code, it is evident that we must pay less attention to the decisions themselves than to the customs he presupposes.

The general characteristics of this ancient Code stand out fairly clearly. It concerns a community already of considerable antiquity, in which the central authority has long since broken down any tendency to feudal independence, in which written contracts, drawn up with a wealth of witnesses and of seals, regulate even the trivial transactions of everyday life. It contains administrative rules concerning certain rents and salaries. There seems to be no trace of nobles, but the king's officer, the constable, and the taxgatherer are in great prominence. The system of government is democratic, but subject to an all-powerful master. Much attention is paid to agriculture and trade, especially by means of navigable

ways; and the shepherd's life is known. There are masters and slaves. But, in the case of natives, of free men sold by their father, the law is mild compared with other ancient codes, in that it does not allow them to be kept in bondage for more than three years.

The family is based almost wholly on monogamy. Polygamy may be said to appear only when the first wife is childless, and even then the lawful wife has many ways of asserting her own predominant position. If we except Egyptian laws, there is no body of laws in the whole of antiquity more favourable to woman. Adultery is in her case, even as now, more severely punished than in the case of her husband, but she has the right of seeking redress for the misconduct of her lord. Her privileges are especially prominent in the marriage contracts. Thus she may receive a "gift" or marriage settlement from her husband, which is decidedly contrary to the spirit of Roman law. Everything is arranged so that if widowed, her position will not depend upon the mere whim of her children.

The father of the family does not hold his wife *in manu*. And his power over his children is far less than in Rome. For though he may sell them to pay his debts, he cannot "cut them off from sonship" without reason, and is obliged to overlook for the first time an offence calling for disinheritance. It would appear from the constant care taken to assure equal division of property among the children, that the father's right to dispose of property by will could only be exercised in favour of the eldest son, or in such

manner that the property eventually returned to the family. The legalisation of adoption completes the family system, and helps to attenuate one of the blots on the Code—the abandoning of the offspring of prostitutes and palace officials.

Contracts between citizens were based upon common agreement; there were no legal formulas, no captious lawsuits. Damages were assessed according to equity. Retaliation was the general rule, though it was mitigated by money payment, as among Jews and Romans. In case of doubt, recourse was had to sworn depositions, or to the decision of the river-god.

You see, then, that this Code is a vigorous attempt made by human reason to obtain justice. It is far in advance of the narrow sacerdotal formalism of Rome, which only reached such a degree of humanity under the Antonines.

Let us now take some points of detail and compare the Code with the Jewish Law. To begin with, what were its provisions with regard to divorce? The question is not without its interest even at the present day.

Legislation on this matter gives a touchstone whereby to test the esteem in which woman is held by the community. No ancient civilization ever rose to absolute indissolubility of the marriage tie. The Jews allowed only the husband to repudiate. When divorce is allowed, woman is placed on the same footing as man. Babylonian legislation was based upon the husband's right to repudiate, but came very near to divorce. At first sight, repudiation seems easy

if the wife is childless. But even then, the husband "shall give her money as much as her dowry, and shall pay her the marriage portion which she brought from her father's house"; and "if there was no dowry, he shall give her one mina of silver for a divorce" (§§ 138, 139). If the wife becomes an invalid, it is not sufficient reason for repudiating her, unless she herself wishes to go (§§ 148–9). If, however, she misbehaves, her husband may put her away without compensation, or may retain her as a maid-servant (§ 141). On the other hand, the wife also may have recourse to divorce. She may refuse conjugal rights; and if it is proved that her husband is of loose character, and that she is thrifty and free from fault, she shall take her marriage portion and go off to her father's house (§ 142), though she incurs the risk of being "thrown into the waters" if the result of the inquiry goes against her (§ 143). A childless wife had a remedy against repudiation or having to tolerate the presence of a rival: she might give one of her maids to her husband, and if the woman bore him children he was forbidden to take a concubine (§ 144). The case was foreseen in which the fortunate servant might become a rival; once she had borne children, however, her mistress could not sell her, but she might put a mark upon her and treat her as a slave. This point of Babylonian law casts a wonderful light on the two episodes in the life of Abraham. When Sarah complained of her servant the first time (Gen. xvi. 6), Abraham replied, in accordance with the Code, that that was her own

business, and that she might treat her servant as she pleased. But when Sarah wishes to cast her out (Gen. xxi. 10), "Abraham took it grievously," for she was going beyond her rights; he only consented at the special command of God.

It is hardly necessary to insist upon the close resemblance there is between this Code, the customs of the patriarchs, and the law of the Jews (Deut. xxiv. 1 *seq.*). Jewish law, nevertheless, is not so favourable to the rights of women, although it exacts a good reason from the husband who repudiates his wife. The School of Hillel, as is well known, was satisfied with the most futile of pretexts, and in so doing was certainly at variance with the ancient principles.

The Code approaches Jewish law in a matter that was once thought unique, and directly due to divine influence. Section 117 provides that if a man has been forced to sell his wife, his son or his daughter, in order to pay a debt, the buyer may only employ them for three years; in the fourth year he must set them free. This is similar to the setting free of the Hebrew slave at the end of six years. It is quite true the Jewish law was more general, and extended to all Hebrew slaves, but it was less mild, since the slave was only set free in the seventh year.

On the other hand, the Hebrew never seems to have thought of selling his wife; in the eyes of Bedouins it would be the greatest disgrace that could befall them.

In some cases the resemblance is even closer. I

will quote a remarkable instance: the Hebrew text of Exodus (xxii. 28 *seq.*) says: "If an ox strikes (with its horns) a man or a woman, and he dies, the ox shall be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten, and the owner of the bull is not responsible. And if the ox was wont to strike yesterday and the day before, and its owner was warned, and if he took no precaution, and if it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner shall also be put to death; and if compensation is accepted, he must give what is exacted from him." Now listen to the Babylonian Code (§ 250). "If a wild bull in his charge has gored a man and caused him to die, that case has no remedy. (§ 251) If the ox has pushed a man, by pushing has made known his vice, and he has not blunted his horn, has not shut up his ox, and that ox has gored a man of gentle birth, and caused him to die, he shall pay half a mina of silver."

The two cases are parallel, the general spirit of both is the same, but there is a marked though subtle difference of tone. Among the Jews everything is simpler, more rudimentary, and bears marks of stricter justice, at least materially stricter. The vicious ox must be taken care of: that is the country custom; the Babylonian custom, that its horn must be blunted or the ox be shut up. The negligent Jewish owner incurs the penalty of death; the hardship is doubtless great, but provision is made for money compensation, and the sum is to be fixed by the parties. The length of suchlike discussions among the Bedouin tribes is only too well known. And lastly, the Jews stoned

the ox, thus taking the summary justice of less civilized races, possibly necessary to impress more deeply upon men the idea of absolute justice. Nearly every section of the Code brings home to us the difference there was between a learned, well-policed, and ancient community, and the customs of a nomadic people, rougher and apparently older, if simplicity and rusticity of usages really are any sign of antiquity.

A much-discussed exegetical problem has, I think, been definitely solved and set at rest by the Code. In certain cases in which the Law is doubtful, the Hebrew Book of the Covenant insists that the parties should present themselves *before God*. The Septuagint seems to have understood the sense of the phrase and rendered it *before the tribunal of God*, that is to say, the matter is to be referred to the judgement of God. But even as early as the time of St. Jerome, rabbinical tradition took ĕlōhîm as a plural in the sense of judges. This interpretation has become quite the usual one among Catholic commentators. Independent scholars protested—pointing out that 'Ĕlōhîm meant God, that the cases referred to, were such as no judge decides, and in which recourse must be had to the judgement of Him who sees all things. They spoiled their case, however, by insisting that this presentation "before God" was so concrete that He must necessarily have been represented by an idol; thus introducing idolatry into Israel, not merely as an abuse, but into the very Law itself, as an authorized and recognized fact.

Now Ḥammurabi supposes that in several cases the matter will be taken "before God." Some present themselves "before God," others swear by the name of God. These two distinct methods are applicable to different hypothetical cases which may all be grouped under one general idea—that when the doubt is insoluble the decision is left to God. How, then, is this decision of God obtained? Simply by taking an oath. God is judge when a man affirms his right before Him. He is thereby called to avenge Himself upon the perjurers. This God is neither Bel nor Marduk, the king's favourite gods, but it is the Deity in its most abstract form. Recourse is had to the Deity, who is everywhere and knows everything, to discover what happened in foreign lands. God is more especially the judge invoked in the cases of accidents, for the accident is spoken of definitely as "a stroke of God" (§ 266). Now there was no need to seek out, as it was customary to do in Egypt, the visible image of the God who sees everywhere and who operates by His hidden power. It all worked itself into a simple attestation in His name.

The whole of this part of the legislation of the Book of the Covenant is changed or passed over in silence by the Deuteronomic Law. And so the Book of the Covenant, in this respect so like the Code of Ḥammurabi, particularly bears the mark of the highest antiquity.

I shall not insist upon a comparison destined to become one of the commonplaces of biblical criticism. I only wish to draw certain conclusions on the use of the historical criticism.

We are not better than our fathers were, far from it, but at the same time we certainly are not less well informed about the past. Thanks to a wonderful discovery, we are now able to place the civil legislation of the Jews in its full historical setting. The part God took therein seems less apparent; we can no longer speak with such assurance of its superiority; in the matter of civilization it is behind a Code a thousand years older. If you are determined only to see sublime thoughts in the Scriptures, it were better to give us back the spiritual meanings of the Fathers, which will always find an echo in Christian souls, than to tie us down to narrow ill-informed exegetical efforts, the more so, that, were the new exegesis allowed to place the Jewish law in its full historical setting, it would be seen to greater advantage in its divine setting.

In the days of Moses, or even later, the Jews were a relatively unpolished and backward race, but, as I have already pointed out, they had only one God. How came it, then, that the name given them by the prophets is the very name of the Deity Himself, who sees all countries and is the avenger of oaths? Why is the El of Ḥammurabi only at the head of his pantheon, while among the Jews He stands alone, since Yahweh was only another name, peculiar to the Israelites, for the same God of their fathers? Furthermore, that God was exacting of justice. While He is not concerned with introducing into the Law the refinements of civilization, yet at the same time He excludes its rottenness. The Code of Ḥammurabi officially recognizes the status of palace favourites

occupying an infamous position, and who are forbidden to have children; the Hebrew code treats such persons as dogs, and will not tolerate them among the sons of Israel.[1]

Moreover, the Code of Ḥammurabi allowed of recourse by magic to supernatural powers, since such magical practices are only condemned when unjust. The Book of the Covenant absolutely forbids them. From a religious point of view, therefore, the Jewish law is incontestably superior, and in so far it contains the germ of unlimited perfection; for whereas in Ḥammurabi the ancient religious heritage of mankind—the desire to obey and please the Deity—is directed to the inventions of polytheism, in the ancient Hebrew Code it is concentrated upon one God, the God of the tribe; in Deuteronomy it rises to the expression of love for God; and then in Jesus it overflows on all mankind. There is no need to hold that the civil law of the Jews is heaven-sent, nor that it is absolutely perfect; if the Jews were not able to bring their customs to greater perfection, it is still less likely that, unaided, they should have been able to discover what Ḥammurabi failed to find—the unity and infinite goodness of God. The more strictly historical our exegesis is in character, the more will it be led to recognise that we owe religious truth to Revelation.

[1] It is mentioned only in Deut. (xxiii. 17), the reason apparently being that the abuse in this form was not known to the old tribes; for Ḥammurabi's Code probably deals with officials of the palace and the great sanctuaries. Moreover, the most ancient of Jewish traditions betoken the same feeling of repulsion for unnatural vice.

Thus, as you see, we do not abandon the old method; we extend its range over the immense field that opens out before us. If, then, the use of this comparative method enables us to discern more clearly the part played by divine intervention, undeniable as it is in religious and moral matters, and consequently penetrating into the realm even of civil customs—without, however, overturning or troubling anything, still more so will it cast light upon the legislative development of Israel in the course of history. And this brings us at once to the question of the Pentateuch.

At the close of a lecture no one will expect me to present a solution of that problem. I would only point out how it stands to-day, and indicate the direction in which a solution, alike Catholic and critical, may be hoped for. My only desire is that I may rouse some men of good will to prepare for the great future that is opening up for young workers.

In discussing knotty questions which involve a multitude of different elements, we must beware of taking things as a whole. Until quite recently there were many who took the Pentateuch question to be simply this: that either Moses really wrote the Pentateuch as many texts imply, as others affirm, and as is in accordance with the whole of Jewish tradition, or Esdras must have deceived the people by giving out as the Law of Moses a paper-made unreal code, which no one had ever heard mentioned before, and which no people under heaven, living outside a

sacristy or a school, could ever put into practice. The problem as thus stated was solved by Bossuet in flowing language. This is the way in which the question has been too often set out; but even though it shows traces of that tendency to which poor human nature so easily gives way—the tendency to weaken an objection by exaggerating its force—still it must be admitted that the unrestrained language used by independent critics was to some extent responsible for it: they delighted so much in destroying for sheer destruction's sake, that we feared to be left without a roof over our heads, the more so, that we could not hope to take refuge in any of the haphazard constructions that were being run up on the other side of the road.

The problem is one of extreme complexity. Our aim is not to destroy, but to fix the date of the different parts of the edifice. The task is an extremely delicate one. Let me point out, to begin with, as we have been treating of Ḥammurabi, one of the mistakes critics have made by unduly insisting on the influence of environment.

Of late years they would have us believe that books grow up almost spontaneously. They compare the Pentateuch to the geological deposits normally formed at the bottom of the sea. The very most they allow is, that there was always some one there to place one layer upon the other when it had acquired the necessary thickness. For a long time there was a tendency in historical writers to minimize the influence exercised by great men, and to attribute

everything to the latent instinctive development of the nation. We may allow the great influence that environment exercises, since the individual is powerless against the combined influences at work in particular circumstances, but at the same time, we should remember that these forces often attain their fullest development in the individual. Moses has been too much belittled; the contention that Deuteronomy could not have been written upon stones is evidently wrong (Deut. xxvii. 8), since Ḥammurabi has inscribed upon one single block about two hundred and fifty sections of his Code, together with a prologue and an epilogue. This, of course, materially strengthens the case for the possibility of a Mosaic code; and to further add to its likelihood, there comes the fact of the existence even of a code of laws at a most remote period, and the extraordinary impulse given by one single man to an epoch which we are accustomed to consider to have been plunged in the traditional immobility of the East.

On the other hand, can we, as Catholics, refuse to accept the principle of legislative progress? Remember what we have just seen, namely, the adaptation of the Law to the needs, or rather its historical agreement with the social standing of the Jews. When the Law was looked upon as in some sense heaven-sent, the obvious conclusion was that it was immutable, sufficient to meet the needs of all times; for we cannot deny Almighty God the wisdom called for by such laws, nor man the obligation of always obeying them. If, however, the civil legislation of the

Jews in the time of Moses is only an approbation given to the customs of the time, because God desires to change nothing in the normal order of things, does it not necessarily follow that if He were to reduce His people to absolute changelessness, He would be acting in contradiction to Himself, and to the very principles of His supernatural providence? It is natural that customs should change, and to bind the Jews down to the *status quo* would be to disturb the natural order of things. In the New Testament our Faith, rich and unchanging as it is, stands in the way of no kind of progress. Why should it have been otherwise in the Old Testament, which had no such wealth of dogmas? If you admit the teaching of history, that the religious law was adapted to the customs of the Jews without any violent change in those customs, it necessarily follows that the same gentle and condescending Providence helped rather than impeded the development of laws among the Hebrews, otherwise we should have to face the contradictions implied in the fact that the religious progress, which none would deny, had produced no effect on the habits and customs of the people; or that the development of customs had been continually paralyzed by an unyielding law, or that there was a prohibition against such development of laws being recorded. Do you wish to be forced to face any such contradictions?

The development, reason would have led one to presuppose, is shown by evidence to be a fact from the comparison of the Book of the Covenant in Exodus with the Deuteronomic Torah, the real term of a

development. Some have recognized the progress made; but as they cannot make up their mind to attribute Deuteronomy to anyone but Moses, they fall back upon the explanation by the changes which had taken place in the mind of Moses after a period of forty years. But then, the development is too rapid. Is it at all likely that after the Law had been given by God on Mount Sinai, forty years later God would transform it, and then make it unchangeable for ages? And both laws would precede the entry into the land of Canaan, the great event that was destined to work a complete social and political transformation. Our historical sense protests against any such conclusion. And, moreover, it is a positive fact that the Book of the Covenant approaches nearer to the Code of Ḥammurabi, which is one thousand years earlier in date, than it does to Deuteronomy. Thus the recourse to the judgement of God, the presentation before God, has been eliminated from Deuteronomy.

How, then, are we to understand tradition and the words of Scripture which attribute Deuteronomy to Moses? We are to take them in a broad but true sense.

If the Deuteronomic Torah is but the perfected form of the Book of the Covenant, and if the Book of the Covenant is the work of Moses, Moses is the author of the Deuteronomic Torah. In the same way the Institutes of Justinian might well be termed the Institutes of Gaius, were there not many more differences between them, due to the influence of Christian ideas.

But even if that were to be allowed, some well-informed persons might object that we know very well that rationalist critics no more attribute the Book of the Covenant to Moses than they do the Deuteronomic Torah, and that many think they are extremely generous if they leave him the Decalogue. If we give way on this point, they say, one concession will lead to another, until there is nothing left to concede.

But it depends on us to choose the ground on which we can and must defend the Scriptures. It will always be very difficult to say exactly what Moses wrote with his own hand, but the tradition that represents him as the lawgiver of Israel can never be overthrown, and never shall we consent to abandon it, for the great facts of history are beyond the reach of mere literary subtleties.

Now what reason is given for denying the Book of the Covenant to be as old as Moses? It is said to presuppose a race of tillers of the soil, while the Israelites in Moses' time were nomads, real Bedouins.

We might reply that the relatively scanty allusions to tillage are later additions. This, on critical grounds, would be unanswerable. But there remains the additional fact that those who have never seen the East, or have only seen it under the guidance of Cook's tourist agency (nothing to be ashamed of, since a great sovereign made his entry into Jerusalem dressed like Lohengrin, escorted by Mr Thomas Cook in a felt hat), are not always able to fully understand the customs of the country. Take, for instance, the

cisterns: there is a cistern, of course, in every house in Jerusalem, but there are also cisterns to be found in the heart of the desert; they are wanted by nomads as well as by town-dwellers. Again, where will you find Bedouins who do not cultivate the soil? Father Jaussen, a former pupil of mine, now my colleague, has made it his business to study the habits of the Bedouins beyond the Black Sea. In vacation time, during August, he sets out to enjoy the air under their tents. His articles show what the Bedouins mean by tillage. The true sons of the desert do not till themselves, but they frequently cause the ground to be tilled for them. And it may further be asked whether the Israelites really were nomads. From the account Genesis gives us of the lives of the patriarchs, it would not seem necessarily to follow. In the Sinaitic Peninsula itself agriculture is impossible. The Israelites, however, stayed at Cades (Kadesh Barnea) during almost the entire forty years they spent in the desert. The site of Cades is now known. Our Biblical Caravan is one of four or five European expeditions which have been able to penetrate into those dangerous parts. Everywhere we found traces of ancient agriculture and dwellings; the men who lived there were no real nomads, and the whole of the legislation of the Book of the Covenant could be applied there.

It is reassuring to be able to add that the change which actually did take place among the Jews was not very great. The Hammurabic Code now enables us to show that Israel ever remained true to its

nomadic ideal. The respect in which it held its ancient customs stands out very strikingly in two particular instances.

You remember the position the wife had been able to create for herself in the Babylonian home. Although it was not equal to the *maestria* of the Egyptian women, who seem to have been in the full sense of the Egyptian term the mistress of the house, yet it was much more than the inferior position assigned to the Bedouin wife, less hidden away than that of the modern Mahometan; but even so, she was forced to grind corn and carry water—often a great distance. The fact is, that the emancipation and occasionally the subsequent domination of woman is generally the outcome of worldly town-life. The severe law of the Jews is desert law. It could never have grown up in Jerusalem in the days of Achaz, when the prophet Isaias was reproaching the elegant women of the city for their "anklets, and the cauls and the crescents; the pendants and bracelets and the mufflers; the head tires and the ankle chains and the sashes, and the perfume boxes and the amulets; the rings and the nose jewels; the festival robes and the mantles, and the shawls and the satchels; the hand mirrors and the fine linen, and the turbans and the veils."[1] While the great ladies walked with short steps and tinkling their ankle chains as they went along. Jewish laws show little trace of the influence of such luxury and independence of spirit.

Blood-revenge is another point very characteristic

[1] Is. iii. 18 *seq.*

of nomadic customs. Amongst the Bedouins the duty of punishing murders and assassinations belongs to each family, and is no concern of the ruling authority. When a family is too weak, it seeks an avenger. I give here an unpublished account sent me by an eye-witness, Father Jaussen, of what takes place at the present day beyond the Jordan. Whilst all the Arabs are gathered together in full assembly, grouped round the sheik, quietly sitting on their heels, listening to the story of a raid or discussing general topics, the sheik's daughter enters with a cup of coffee in her hand, and pointing out the murderer by name, says in a loud voice, "Who will drink such a one's cup of coffee?" Complete silence follows. Generally some one rises and says, "I will drink it." The girl hands him the cup and he drinks it. He thus becomes the avenger, and is bound to kill the assassin or to be covered with shame.

The Ḥammurabi Code does not say a word on blood-revenge, and it is highly improbable that it should have had any place in so centralized a community, in which the hand of the law was everywhere, and the police made raids on the shops of wine-sellers, who, under penalty of death, were held responsible for any plots hatched under their roof. Among the Israelites, in spite of milder modifications, the general principle remains that "the blood-avenger shall kill the murderer as soon as he finds him" (Num. xxxv. 21). This quotation is from a passage which critics agree in assigning to the Priestly Code; and it is held, with every appearance of justification, that the Priestly

Code is the latest of the documents which form the Pentateuch.

There is one more point to which I desire to direct your attention. Here is a custom characteristic of primitive communities in which central authority exercises little influence, a custom which civilized society condemns and endeavours to eradicate wherever met with, and yet it is found in this last stage of Jewish legislation, which has so often been represented as the arbitrary product of sacerdotal imagination in search of fanciful laws.

It speaks volumes for the unchanging character of customs, softened though they may be by the development of law—as is the case in this instance. Now, if the reality of this unchanging character stands out so clearly in civil law, why should not the same be true of ritual law? Naturally it is even more strongly traditional, since rites are everywhere held to be unchangeable, in virtue of their real or presumed divine origin. So that we may be quite sure that if the Pentateuch represents a recent revision, that revision merely utilizes much more ancient elements, contemporaneous with or even anterior to Moses, and so, we have good ground for asking, whether after all, tradition was not right in assigning the authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses? At the same time biblical critics are fully entitled to study in this great Code the literary differences which record the changes inseparable from any human institution, even though it be at the same time divine.

The remarks I have made are so general, that they

can hardly be said even to mark out the field of discussion. What I have said, however, will suffice to show even the youngest of you how much there is still to be done, and how tradition and criticism may be brought to agree on the civil legislation of the Israelites.

LECTURE VI

ON PRIMITIVE HISTORY

WHEN, in the previous Lecture on the authority of the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, I applied to history the same principles as to science, the thought must have occurred to you, that for every point of similarity there might be between science and history, viewed as matter for biblical criticism, there were many more points of difference. Every kind of knowledge has its own rules and methods. In the first place, granted that we may hold that there is no science in the Bible, it would be more than paradoxical to maintain that the Bible contained no history, seeing that the Bible is the history of salvation. Science, moreover, based as it is upon experiment and calculation, is naturally outside the sphere of the greater number of men as soon as it goes beyond the mere observation of natural phenomena, while history, in itself, is nothing but the record of the doings of men as established by testimony. If in late years it has seemed to move in a somewhat mysterious region, it is simply because of the attention given to the study of sources

which calls for specialized knowledge and a critically trained mind; but, in itself, history is but the record of what eye-witnesses have seen. So that while scientific theories like our own could not possibly have found a place in the Bible without an absolutely unnecessary revelation, and without doing violence to men's minds, on the other hand, no supernatural help was needed to write sound history.

Hence there is no science in the Bible, although throughout, an elementary knowledge of arithmetic is supposed, for that is well within the range of man; there are no metaphysics in the Bible, although the normal use of the intellect is always assumed; there is much history in the Bible, because the writing of history is familiar to all people who have reached the same stage as the Israelites. Now, if God did not reveal to His chosen people any scientific or metaphysical proposition, at that time beyond the range of their mind, because it was not profitable for their salvation, we have good ground for holding that neither did He reveal to them any history that was beyond the range of what could be seen or known except in so far as it was necessary for salvation. Hence, and this is a further difference, we have no hesitation in placing history, that is to say, the record of men's deeds, in a different category from the sciences and from metaphysics, because a man's salvation is inseparably connected with his actions. Thus it is quite possible that God may have made a revelation of history, and hence it is, that I wish to exclude from the conclusions which follow, all that concerns the Fall of man. On the

other hand, no one will deny that not all that appears to be historical is really historical; and so I need not insist upon the now generally accepted and perfectly simple theory—so simple indeed that I can hardly claim as my own the words which express it—to the effect that the value of statements seemingly affirmative or negative depends entirely upon the style of literary production in which such apparently categorical statements appear. The first thing to be done is to determine the various literary styles found in the Bible and presenting the appearance of history. Catholic sentiment rightly shrinks from the use of the word 'myth,' but between myth and history there lies a very wide field. Let us examine, then, the different forms of literary production known to the ancients, so as to find out how many of them the Bible contains, in order to be able to estimate the true character of the expressions used. As our time is limited, we must confine ourselves to dealing with knotty points. It should, of course, be clearly understood, that if I do not speak of history in the strict sense of the word, it is not that I take it to be absent from the Bible, on the contrary it is present, under its normal conditions, with the special character of religious history. The whole problem would, by some, be resumed in the one question as to whether nothing but history is to be found in the Bible. To-day I am only going to touch on the first chapters of Genesis.

I know of no adequate definition of history. That given by Cicero is well known to you all, in this fruit-

ful home of Latin culture; but I am afraid it is too flattering, although no doubt the great orator was right in declaring it to be the memory of times past, meaning by 'times' a group of facts with their attendant circumstances,—what we should now call an epoch, as when we speak of the life and times of St. Louis. Without such facts and circumstances no history is possible. Were a writer to state that in the first ages of the world Titius married Titia, no one would say that that was history. We should point out, that the only distinctly historical indication given—the Roman names of Titius and Titia—did not give the slightest idea of that remote epoch, since the Latin tongue was then non-existent. If it be added that Titius was the son of Gaius, we are none the better off. The only thing to be gleaned would be, that at a very remote, but not fixed period of time, men married as they do to-day. If that is history, it is of a very elementary type.

How many circumstances, it may be asked, are required to bring the transmitted fact into the range of real history?

That cannot be fixed in the abstract. At the very least some kind of note of place and time will be wanted. I need not tell you that chronology and geography are the very eyes of history—to use a pretentious but expressive phrase. If history cannot see clearly, it no longer possesses the light of life and all that follows it.

On the other hand, the most careful indications of time, place, and all other circumstances, the most

scrupulous appearance of exactness, cannot constitute history if they all proceed from the imaginative brain of a novel-writer. The reality of the facts is wanting. The fact must really have occurred to give history a groundwork; it must have been duly noted and its general features recorded; it must have been handed down by contemporaries to the generations which follow them, to allow of its being seen in the twilight of the past.

Now let us bring the light of facts to bear upon these conditions. Historical methods have their own degrees of accuracy, as worthy of consideration as the accuracy of the sciences. Psychological phenomena belong to the domain of observation, even as do other phenomena.

We may begin with a point which all may notice, namely, the variations of witnesses as to accessory circumstances, even though they are in complete agreement as to the main facts.

This is well known to everyone; in fact, it is usual to add, when there is any interest in putting the main fact beyond the reach of doubt, that these very variations constitute an additional proof that each witness saw for himself independently, and that the agreement of the testimonies thus acquires greater weight. This may be granted, but it must also be allowed, that the certainty of the main fact does not imply a corresponding certainty in the details.

On that point agreement will never be possible, for witnesses do not always agree as to the meaning of

their words. The falling of a few drops will make some say that it rained, while others would not call that rain. Some, again, would admit defeat, others would contend that it could not be called a defeat; so that, given a variety of circumstances, variety in detailed accounts may always be looked for.

An event duly recorded by contemporaries is handed down to posterity either by oral tradition or by writing. Writing preserves the original statement; oral tradition, on the other hand, cannot preserve facts and circumstances without the help of some very definite point by which to fix their position in time and place. We may not like to grant this, but we must give way to force of evidence. What leads us astray is the fact that what is frequently taken to be oral tradition, is really a story preserved in writing, and possibly due to some writer's imagination; we are further misled by the tenacity of traditions connected with names of places and customs. In the East this is particularly evident. The Greeks and Romans, as is well known, changed the names of many towns: Accho, for instance, was re-named Ptolemais; but, in spite of all official pressure, the name dating back to the time of the Assyrian kings has held its own down to our own day. Perhaps a more extraordinary instance, and one I have often cited before, relates to a fact within my own experience. I was at Petra with Father Vincent, and we were inquiring, as one is used to do, the name of every place we saw—even of tombs if they stood in a place apart. We had entered a large

excavation in the rock, when we asked, "What do you call this?" "Madrésé," we were told. And there, on the inside wall, we read in Nabataean characters which no one had ever noticed before, the name of Duchara, god of Madrasa. We were astounded; and I must admit that on that day I really did believe in the wonderful power of oral tradition.

Tradition, moreover, hands down certain customs. Many are fond of seeking for traces of pagan survivals in the very midst of the most Christian populations. In such case, of course, it is noteworthy that although the custom be kept, the meaning attached to it has changed.

The same may be said of the tales that are told from one end of the world to the other. They are quite similar, as those versed in folklore point out with wonder. They are similar, and yet they have undergone change, for they are remodelled, so to speak, according to new ideas and new customs with which they have come in contact. Tradition is not deaf and dumb as is writing. While listening to the voice of the past, it keeps its ears open to the sounds of the present; and although its beginnings are rooted in the past, still it has to satisfy the needs of hearers who cannot understand foreign names, who take scandal at old world habits, and who are only touched by what is intensely human in the old stories when it is made to harmonize with their own feelings; so that in the supposition of a true story becoming popular as it spread, everything would tend to cause it to lose the proper names and the local colour which

originally characterized it; and if some great name, like that of Cæsar or Charlemagne, is not forgotten, the man of the legend bears no resemblance to the man as known to history. The wondrous elasticity of tradition gets rid of all foreign elements, and substitutes others more congenial to its way of thinking, all embroidered on the unchanging canvas of stirring adventures which fire the hearts of men and make women weep. Above all else, curiosity has to be satisfied, that curiosity which is all intent upon the story-teller.

Now curiosity is never so ill-satisfied as when tradition has only preserved the name of a place. How is it to be fully satisfied? If memories fail, tradition creates. I will cite again an example of which I have already made use. There are in Jerusalem two churches dedicated to St. Cosmas and St. Damian. In the East, and more particularly in Jerusalem, every church has its history. Why are these two churches dedicated to these saints? Had there been only one, the reply would have turned on their martyrdom. . . . But martyrdom cannot always be invoked, for sometimes history protests. History is, however, less well-informed as to births, and usually legends fix upon births. And so one of these churches is the birthplace of the saints: *ubi nati sunt.* But what of the other? What was the occupation of St. Cosmas and St. Damian? They were physicians, says legend or history. So there it was they practized the healing art: *ubi medicabant.* The village of Ain Karim, near Jerusalem, is, according to very

probable traditional arguments, the home of Zachary and Elizabeth. It has two sanctuaries: hence their town-house and their country-house. Now if tradition has such creative power when there is scarcely anything to work upon, what are we to say of its fruitfulness when it is able to assign to words, the true meaning of which it has lost, a meaning full of history? When I was by the spring of Ain Farah, near Jerusalem, the name of which is very probably ancient, traditional, and connected with a Hebrew root indicating the fertility caused by the spring,—the place seems to be mentioned in Jeremias, and certainly in Josue,—an Arab told me the name was derived from a mouse, in Arabic *fara*, which had been seen to come out of the spring. If at Petra, I had asked my guide, Farrar, the origin of the name *Madrésé*, which means *school* in Arabic, I am sure he would have replied that formerly there was a school on the spot.

There, then, you have some recorded instances; and one cannot but admire the wealth of imaginative power the people possess, as well as the tenacity of their memory. But when you come to actual definite facts, to things which occurred some thirty, forty, or a hundred years ago, no one knows anything about them, simply because they are not interested in them. If you have no confidence in what anthropologists tell us, consult our own missionaries. There is no difficulty in obtaining the very best information. They will tell you that nearly all races know very well what took place at the beginning of the world, but are entirely

ignorant of the history of the generation that has passed away. They are savages, I admit, and we have made up our minds not to make a primitive man a savage, a mere worn-out remnant of an evolutionary failure. Well, ask the people who live around you. Do any of the uneducated know the name of Louis XIV.? When I was a boy I knew old men who remembered seeing the Austrians, but they could not have given 1813 as the date. In Burgundy I was once much surprised to hear a farm-labourer praise the buildings of the Romans: of course he must have been to school. When, however, I asked him to show me them, he took me to a very fine cellar built by Cistercian monks. It is usual to weaken the force of such proofs by remarking that when people do not write, they cultivate their memories the more: we forget what we have spent, they say, when we have made a note of it, and not before. That, of course, may be true in particular instances, but in any case you must take an interest in facts if you are not going to forget them. A people will remember for some time great pillagers who have passed like a plague over the land. But in bygone ages there were so many, that in the end they were confused one with another.

After all, we must admit that history is first sister to writing. When a mighty monarch such as Narâm-Sin, or a proud petty sheik such as Mesa, wished his deeds to be known for ever, and had them written down, it was because he realized that it was the only way to escape oblivion. Then it was, that history

really began. Like everything else, it had its preludes; and we have no means of saying whether writing had not already preserved the ancient records of temples in which a continuous series of priests went still further back, keeping customs and names linked together.

Now let us look at the facts impartially and ask ourselves whether the Bible contains a real history extending from the first man down to Jesus Christ. Let us begin by saying that it makes no such claim, and then, examine what is really the case, respectfully seeking an answer in the Bible itself.

Mankind is very ancient, and the Hebrew race is relatively very young. This no one can deny. I do not base myself on prehistoric facts, and will touch on a single argument, which will allow us to compare the Israelites and a neighbouring mighty nation. At the outset, I may point out that independent scholars are not always in such a hurry to lengthen chronology. To judge from the writings of some apologists, one would be led to suppose that they added on thousands of years simply for the sake of doing so. Nabonidus, king of Babylon, declares that he found the foundation stone laid by Narâm-Sin, who reigned three thousand two hundred years before him. It was Winckler, Lehman, and other non-catholics, who suggested deducting one thousand years from this date of 3200 years admitted by M. Vigouroux. These scholars considered the deduction justified by our not having sufficient known facts to fill in that period. That was surely an excess of carefulness, for a new discovery

might easily fill in the gap. However, on a moderate estimate, 4000 B.C. may be given as the date of the first Chaldean monarchs, because Narâm-Sin was not the most ancient of them. Now we are able to go back to those times, not by vague memories, but by the help of written documents. We have, then, the groundwork of a history. We can only conclude that civilization, religion, language and writing had by that time reached such an advanced stage of development that we are quite unable to calculate the date at which they began. We merely point to the fact that writing and language underwent no marked change during the whole course of the three thousand five hundred years which followed. That being the case, try and estimate the amount of time that would be required for the differentiation of the language from the other Semitic languages for the writing to undergo the transition from the depicting of an object to the artificial cuneiform script inscribed on stones or clay. The artificial Tell of Susa, now being explored by M. Morgan and the French expedition with him, is thirty-three metres high. So far it has been explored to the depth of four or five metres: at that point were found monuments dating from two to three thousand years before Christ. They were arranged as though in a museum! Much more still awaits discovery.

I have no wish to insist unduly upon these facts. But let us give up resisting what is proved, let us cease finding fault with Manetho for making contemporaneous dynasties succeed one another, and ridiculing

the fabulous antiquity of the Chinese. There is here no question of more or less accurate geological measurements of time: mathematical calculations may be wrong, and the wisest scholars avoid using too precise an arithmetical scheme. But in spite of all, it remains a fact that about 2000 years B.C. there were in Egypt and Chaldea two forms of civilization, strongly differentiated and of extreme antiquity. We have not taken anthropologists into account at all; and they would demand no less a time for the transition from the savage state to a complicated administrative system in many respects as carefully worked out as our own.

Let us suppose that in the beginning there was an intelligent active race, possessed of social tendencies; and even then, an incalculable time will be required before it can speak such an already time-worn language, before it can write the transformed signs, before it can acquire such a civilization, such artistic development, especially if one only remembers that all this underwent no variation for three thousand years, and still more so if one admits the unity of the human race and of the primitive language.

Evidently this antiquity of writing, and consequently of history, is of considerable value for our apologetical work. We are already entitled to ridicule the objection made by Voltaire, who laughed at Moses' being able to write, because writing was not known in his day. And as more particularly regards the subject we have in hand, it might be pointed out that primitive man was perhaps very early in possession of the use of writing, so that even if the

Israelites could not bear witness to the accounts of olden times, since their coming upon the world's stage was, particularly on biblical evidence, recent, still they might have taken them from the Chaldeans—a course which, from our point of view, would offer the same guarantees.

I have no objection to make to such an hypothesis. Nothing whatever is known of the origin of writing. There are races which have never reached so far, and there are others which may have discovered it very quickly. But there is no need to enter into a minute examination of an hypothesis when one can turn to facts. And thus it becomes our duty to study very closely the character of the various biblical stories. We now see clearly that this Chaldean history, which has become almost familiar after having belonged so long to an absolutely unknown prehistoric period, is not found in the Bible. Or perhaps one ought to make a distinction. The Bible possessed historical accounts not known to the Greeks. These accounts have, as it were, come to life again in our own days, and have borne witness to the truthfulness of the Bible. This is really a great triumph, and one not to be spurned. The Bible easily overcame the legends of Greece. Its Sennacherib, and Sargon, and the great Tartan of Sargon which called forth Voltaire's mirth, have become part of history; and our older theologians, precisely because they preferred biblical tradition to Herodotus, were in more complete enjoyment of historical truth than many critics of their day. But to tell the truth, those critics were bad logicians. No

one can deny a strictly historical character to the history of the Kings. The biblical writers took the trouble to give their references to official sources, and hence, it would have been critically sound to allow that as the Israelites knew the names of their conquerors, as they had the use and practice of writing, they were in possession of a normal historical record, while the worthy Herodotus, an ever-curious seeker after truth, was nevertheless at the mercy of men who might mislead him, and who could not know how Nineveh had perished, simply because when Nineveh ceased to write, its history came to an end.

If, however, we turn from the official account of the Kings to the primitive biblical story, we find two prominent facts: in the first place, it does not present general characteristics of history in the true sense of the word—to this I shall return; and secondly, it has nothing to say of the historical accounts we have learned from the inscriptions. Neither from the annals of Chaldea nor from those of Egypt did the Israelites take any of those great names which now re-echo so unexpectedly in our lecture-rooms. It does not mention the builders of the Pyramids, nor Thothmes. Narâm-Sin, Sargon the Elder, Manichduchu are unknown to it. The pronunciation of Chaldean names is not always certain, I know, but there is not even an allusion to the part they played in history. It cannot be asserted, then, that the Bible has drawn anything whatever from Chaldean history. One single instance might be alleged, and that is the story of the Amraphel of the Book of Genesis (ch. xiv.), who is

probably the same as Ḥammurabi. But then we are in the days of Abraham, and Ḥammurabi only lived some 2200 years B.C. Besides, the passing allusion is extremely slight if you think of the wonderful part played by the great Babylonian. At first silence reigns. Or rather, any borrowing there may be, is not from history. If there is one story in the Bible which bears a literal resemblance to a Babylonian story, it is the episode of the Deluge. Now the Babylonian Deluge is not an historical account. It forms part of a poem, and is closely bound up with mythology: the whole style of composition is entirely different. So that if you desire to draw a parallel between Israelites and Chaldeans, here the opportunity will be found, and very characteristic it is; the official history of the Israelites fits in very well with the official history of the Assyrians; the oldest memories of the Israelites about the first great leader of their race are, again, linked with the memory of a great Chaldean monarch; their primitive records, which might have drawn so many facts of general history from Assyrian and Egyptian documents, have only slight points of contact with Babylonian tradition; and in the Babylonian traditions those points have at least the appearance of religious myths.

Can it be said that there are myths in the Bible? The very idea jars on the ordinary mind, and it will not allow the word to be uttered. A few Catholic writers, daily growing more numerous, prefer to draw a distinction.

Naturally they are not anxious to retain the word

if it gives pain. But they find its use convenient to express the likeness—at least the external likeness—there is between myths and primitive history; only, they carefully add that the mythological elements found in the Bible have been carefully "stripped of any polytheistic tinge, and are only used to express lofty religious ideas." The phrase is that of Dom Hildebrand Höpfl, a Benedictine, used in a pamphlet directed against the rationalistic methods of the higher critics.[1]

No one, as far as I know, has attempted to analyze this statement or any equivalent one, so that the popular mind is uneasy and not favourably disposed. Speaking for myself, I think it would be well to definitely put the word aside, on the ground that words—which in themselves are of little importance—should only be used in the sense assigned to them by general use. We are accustomed to associate the word "myth" with the idea of a false or even childish religion. Let us leave the word alone, and try and reach the root of the matter.

We may take as an example the story of Lot's wife, changed into a pillar of salt, in circumstances with which you are familiar. The passage is quite definite: "and his wife looking behind her, was turned into a pillar of salt" (Gen. xix. 26). To understand its full meaning you should have seen the locality. To the south of the Dead Sea, on the western side, there lies a long hill, resembling a whale cast ashore. It is an

[1] Höpfl, *Die höhere Bibelkritik*, Paderborn, 1902, p. 63. Cf. *Revue Biblique*, 1902, p. 603.

inexhaustible salt mine, and supplies all the homes of Jerusalem. On the side of the sea, by erosion or by some other geological phenomena, blocks have been formed which look like statues. There still remains at least one for the tradition, which now no longer speaks of the wife of Lot, but of *bint Lout*—the daughter of Lot. Now, ask those who are interested in folklore or mythology—ask yourselves, ask your own common-sense and your conscience. There can be no doubt what the answer will be. Were we to find this phrase elsewhere than in the Bible, we should simply say that popular imagination had personified a thing, and having found in some block of salt a human likeness, connected it with the memory of a woman who disappeared in some great catastrophe. To be changed into stone is generally a punishment, as in the case of Niobe.

Now, if we apply a different criterion in the present instance, it is because the phrase occurs in the Bible, and therefore it is said that we can no longer call the reality of the fact in doubt without accusing the Holy Spirit of error or lying. But we may ask, whether the reality of the fact is so clearly affirmed by the Holy Spirit? If so, all commentators will agree upon the point. When I open one of the last great Catholic commentaries on Genesis, the work of Father Hummelauer, a work published with all the guarantees of orthodoxy inseparably connected—as his colleague Father Grisar said at the Munich Congress—with the very habit he wears, I can find nothing of the sort.

The celebrated biblical scholar supposes that in the awful confusion which arose, the wretched woman was carried away by a wave, rolled in very salt water, covered with foam and salt, and so seemed in the troubled eyes of her husband one mass of salt. That is rationalistic exegesis in the full sense of the word. It was the method employed by Paulus at the beginning of last century to deny the miracles of our Lord. They always became very natural events, which had been badly observed and exaggerated. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, according to the learned biblical scholar, the wife of Lot was not changed into a pillar of salt.

If one were to ask a more simple-minded reader how he understood the text, he would doubtless reply that the body of Lot's wife was changed into salt, and it might be proved that there was nothing physically impossible in this taking place, *saltem de potentiâ Dei extraordinariâ*. But even if philosophy is silent, the text loudly protests.

"The wife of Lot" is not the body of the wife of Lot, it is the whole wife of Lot, soul and body, forming, as you know, a substantial union. At this stage, however, philosophy declines to listen any longer: the text cannot assert that.[1]

[1] "*Certe hallucinatur Bonfrerius totam mulieris substantiam pronuntians in salem esse versam.*" Humm., *Commentar. in Gen.*, p. 417. Paris, 1895. [It seems only fair to quote Bonfrère's own words: "Neque rursum quis suspicatur totius substantiae factam conversionem, quasi etiam anima in salem conversa sit: esto enim id divinâ potentiâ fieri non repugnet, ut substantia incorporea substantialiter vertatur in corpoream, id tamen neque necesse est

Now, that is just the point I wished to reach.

I have endeavoured, in another work,[1] to explain what is meant by *animism*. It is a rudimentary form of philosophy, still to be found among savages, and which does not clearly distinguish the principle of differentiation between animated and inanimated objects. It conceives spirit as being absolutely independent of the bodies it seems to inhabit, neither does it see the essential difference there is between the spirit of a man, the spirit of an animal, and that which in given circumstances causes a stone, usually at rest, to move. According to this philosophy, metamorphosis is quite an ordinary thing. Since every object has, so to speak, an intelligent soul of its own, though but slightly connected with it, the series of mechanical, chemical, physical, organic and other actions and reactions becomes a series of voluntary actions, so that world is no longer within the domain of physical science, but in that of history. If the sun rises, it is because it so wills; and if the stars disappear in his presence, it is because they are afraid of being swallowed up by him. Such is the philosophy of animism in its broadest lines.

Here we are simply noting facts. But when the conclusion is drawn that animism is the root of all religious sentiment, because mankind adores some of these supernatural forces or some of the spirits with

hic asserere, neque ullo modo verisimile esse factum, cum anima suapte natura sit immortalis." Bonfrerius, *Pentateuchus Moysis Commentario Illustratus*, p. 215. (Antwerp, 1625.)]

[1] *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, Introduction.

which it peoples the world, we endeavoured to point out that there was some confusion of ideas. Religious sentiment has its own cause; and even though it generally appears joined with animistic ideas, and although polytheistic religions have sprung from this combination, still it has an object of its own, higher than nature—the Deity. We may now be able to lay down definitely what mythological ideas may be found in the Bible and what are excluded.

Viewed in itself, animism is simply a philosophical error. It saw spirits everywhere, it misunderstood their functions, and confused them with animated or inanimated material objects. When those spirits became the object of religious sentiment, when nature had been deified, that idea of nature, which turned natural development into a story of intentional acts, also led it to turn that story into a history of the gods. So that the irrational element of its childish ideas and all the obscene interpretations of the calm fruitfulness of nature which the caprices of an unbridled imagination could conceive, were all attributed to the world of the gods. Now, it is precisely that which is excluded from the Bible by its very surroundings; that grovelling fantastic invasion of monsters is driven out by the sword of the Cherubim. The notion of one only God, superior to Nature, the creature of His hands, was incompatible with the intermingling of the Divine in Nature, and with natural science turned into a story of divine beings. And since the word "myth," in the minds of men, is used of suchlike stories of the gods, we declare that

in the Bible there are no myths, because to tell the story of gods you must have at least two gods, and the Bible knows but One.[1]

But if what is meant is an erroneous idea as to the constitution of things, I can see no reason against there being traces of it in the Bible, provided that it is held to be on the same level as the scientific errors of the Israelites; that is to say, that such things are not taught. I see no objection to God's struggle against evil, His sovereign action over matter, being set forth as a victory over the monsters Rahab and Leviathan —sprung from the brains of ancient peoples. But just as the Greeks very soon penetrated the unreality of the myth, it is more than likely that the prophets of Israel were by no means deceived by such images, and that, to return to the wife of Lot, the author no more believed in the reality of the fact than when he related the incestuous origin of Moab and Ammon. The irony in the latter case is so sharp, the puns so forced and so bitter, that tradition was well aware of what was meant; and St. Jerome, speaking of the Rabbis of his time, remarks, without any protest against it, "they place points over it to show that it is incredible."[2] But whatever may have been the meaning of the points, the exegetical feeling is quite sound. Satire is not history.

[1] The lofty tone of the Bible in this respect is all the more striking that both Babylonians and Greeks had myths which ascribed an obscene rôle to the Deity. *Cf.* the chapter on Babylonian myths in my *Études sur les religions sémitiques.*

[2] Appungunt desuper, quasi incredibile. (*Quæst. hebr.*)

I took the most difficult point first, and make no pretension of having solved so knotty a problem; and I dare not repeat, after old Eviradnus, that

"L'idée inébranlable et calme est dans le joint."

I have done my best, however, and I do not think I have said anything contrary to sound Christian feeling, or liable to be rejected by sane criticism as contrary to that straightforwardness we are bound to uphold. I would like, moreover, to tone down somewhat the impression produced by the examination of facts which we were bound to make, and to show that although primitive history may not be real history, it still remains far above what is found anywhere else, and is in full conformity with what befits the dignity of inspired Scripture. Legendary primitive history has its place between the myth, which is the story of things personified and deified, and real history. Here, too, has mythology introduced the gods linking their history closely with that of men. The Bible introduces God. That unity stands for much. It would not suffice if God, the one God, was none the better for being alone, if He behaved on earth as one of the gods of Olympus. No man of any sense would utter such a blasphemy. The difficult problem of "the sons of God" in nowise touches God's honour, for they are quite evidently not on the same level as He is. All men are His sons, without that being a reason for partaking of His divine nature.

An objection has been made that God Himself is

not sufficiently transcendent, that He is too familiar in His intercourse with men, speaking to them, closing the door of the ark, making tunics of skin for Adam and his wife. That, of course, is largely a matter of taste. The Yahweh of the ancient stories, who is so severe in dealing with sin, but so good to the just, touches me much more than the sublime Elohim of the priestly code. The infinite God exhausts all our powers of conception and expression. It is quite enough if He always appears good and just, wise, and Ruler of the world. It was thus He revealed Himself in Genesis, and Catholic exegesis may conscientiously maintain that position. We must needs allow there was progress in the ideas held concerning God: in the Old Testament we can lay our finger on it, but it turns much more on the metaphysical attributes of God, than on His qualities as the all-just Master of mankind.

Such is one of the characters who figures in primitive history; but what are men doing? Have we any historical records of the distant ages before the time of Abraham? We have already hinted at the impossibility of anything of the kind. There is there an immense gap. The people that furnishes us with the most ancient documents, two or three thousand years earlier than Moses, the most ancient biblical author known to tradition—for we may leave Father Hummelauer his Adamitic and Noachic documents, meant to take the place of Yahvist and Elohist of the rationalists—that people has no historical information concerning those immense periods truly plunged in the night of time.

In spite of all, people were determined at any cost to reach back to the beginning. The gaping void was no obstacle to the bold imagination of the Hellenes; they filled it with Titans and Giants, demigods and heroes, the struggle of Zeus with the Giants, the exploits of Hercules or of Theseus, and many more besides. The Semites laid hold of something more substantial.

Berosus tells how the god-fish Oannes, by a series of apparitions, led men on to civilization; then he enumerates kings with very long and empty reigns. The Bible is more serious, is closer to truth, and, I venture to say, closer to history. On going back in thought to the beginnings of the race, the historical deeds of individuals entirely escape us, though we do possess the elements at least of the history of civilization; in other words, the progress it has made, and the great discoveries which have led it on to the point reached. When the Bible tells us that the arts developed little by little, that nomadic life gradually assumed its own general characteristics, different from those of town life, that men did not always play the kinnor and flute, nor work brass and iron . . . . I suppose anthropology recognizes it to be quite correct, and that it is impossible otherwise to conceive the beginning and progress of civilization.

But can that be said to constitute history, duly noted and handed down? I do not think so, the reason being that history, or rather what we mean by real history, demands some knowledge of the circumstances, or at least of the time and place. The Bible, of course, cites proper names. But, as I pointed out at the beginning,

that is not enough, because those proper names are given in a Hebrew form which is not their own; and besides, what is the value of a proper name, of which the form has undergone change, in the midst of such a vast expanse of time? And if the syllables do not correspond to syllables, nor yet, doubtless, the sense to the original sense, what is there left of the historical setting of the fact? Can anyone see therein an historical reality which involves the truthfulness of the sacred writer? To what extent is it of faith that Jobal invented music?

And yet, those proper names are a most interesting study. They often seem to me to be the very name of the object invented, thus perhaps witnessing to a marked degree the admirable wisdom of the biblical writer. Could anything, in fact, be more restrained, prudent, and sound than the statement that this or that art, known in our own day, had a beginning, that music was invented by a musician? It is a great virtue to be able to say nothing when you know nothing. It called for much more than that, to put an obstacle in the way of the Greeks; though they, too, were well acquainted with this elementary method. Let me give you some examples found in Pliny.[1] Kloster invented the distaff (κλωστήρ, distaff); Staphylos (σταφυλή, bunch of grapes) mingled water and wine. The oar was discovered in two places—the handle at Kopae (κώπη, handle) and the blade at Plataea (πλατή, flat). Or it may even take the form of a genealogy: thus, according to Philo of Byblos,

[1] *Hist. Nat.*, vii. 57. Cf. *Études sur les religions sémitiques.*

fire is descended from three brothers named Light, Fire, and Flame. It is all true enough, and deceives no one. Turn to the first story we have in the Bible. I pass over the name of Abel, which probably means shepherd. The first town is called Henoch, derived from a word meaning dedication. All have heard of the trumpet of Jubilee, *jobel*: *jobel* in Phoenician means ram: the connection between the two is very natural; the ram's horn was used as a musical instrument. Can we wonder that Jabal was the father of shepherds, and Jobal the father of musicians? The name Cain means blacksmith in Arabic; and it was Tubal-Cain who was the first maker of musical instruments. I do not seek to lower the Bible by making this analysis; on the contrary, I think it works out to its honour.

It was quite out of the question to write real history, and yet it was of importance to show by a continuous chain of evidence the unity of the history of salvation. The Bible avoids absurd or obscene accounts; there is no pretence of ignoring sin, but sin receives its due punishment and is not glorified, as though it changed its character by becoming the privilege of heroes. The Bible avoids even unfounded stories. It is taken up with tangible things, with discoveries which are still known; it relates their origin and progress, and leaves them in a hazy light, which has no outward semblance of actual history. If the personality of Lamech seems to stand out against this background it is only in an elegy. Could the author have told us more clearly that there exists no history of these periods?

I find a similar regard for reality, in so far as it can be reached and set forth, in the story of the Deluge and of the Tower of Babel.

There is a modern school, represented by Canon Cheyne, which considers the Deluge mythical—mythical, that is, in that it is the translation of an astronomical phenomenon into history. But the great majority of anthropologists consider that the Deluge of which accounts are everywhere found, is the memory, more or less modified, of real floods.[1] M. Suess, professor of geology at Vienna, and M. Raymond de Girard, professor of geology at Freiburg, have even considered they could indicate the physical causes of the Babylonian deluge.[2] Be that as it may, the general character of the biblical story points to a real flood, the religious interpretation of which has far surpassed its historical importance. Nor is the Tower of Babel a mere product of the imagination. The biblical writer had certainly seen the gigantic unfinished temple of Borsippa, which Nabuchodonosor, finding in ruins in consequence of the bad state of its gutters, made a boast of achieving. It was no mere flight of the imagination to look upon Babylon as a proud city where all languages were to be heard. And after M. Blanckenkorn's careful investigation, the results of which were accepted as satisfactory by M. de Lapparent, we are entitled to hold that the sinking of the south

[1] M. Loisy does not seem to have definitely made up his mind about these two systems, nor does he point out in his work on Babylonian myths how fundamentally different they are.

[2] *Cf.* M. de Girard's article in the *Revue Thomiste*.

part of the Dead Sea may have taken place at a time when there were men on the earth, and that the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah cannot be simply set aside as purely mythical—as the picturesque expression of the horror inspired by scenery unique in the world for its sublime desolateness. Undoubtedly the biblical story goes far beyond the mere fact, otherwise it would not faithfully express what it wishes to express; but it is always careful to have as the background of its picture some striking reality which fills the horizon, whether it be in the depths of the desert or of the past.

There is a Semitic peculiarity in the use of eponyms which deserves attention on account of the light it casts upon primitive history. The Greeks, as you are aware, made much use of them. Every branch of the race imagined it had an ancestor whose name they derived from their own: Ion for the Ionians, Aeolus for the Eolians, Dorus for the Dorians, then Hellen was put at the top of the genealogical tree. The Greeks, however, never entirely confounded the ancestor and the tribe: the name Ion is never used for the purpose of attributing to it an enterprise of the Ionians. The Israelites do just the reverse: thus Edom is used alternately for the brother of Jacob and for the people who dwelt in the south of Judæa. It is often difficult to say whether it is the people or the ancestor which is meant, and so we get such bold metaphors as Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan.

The interpretation of the stories which charmed our infancy is not as easy as it seemed to us then;

and we may say, with Mgr. Mignot, "that it is no easier for a man who has not specialized in the matter to solve a critical biblical problem, than it is for one who is neither a chemist, surgeon, or physician, or historian, to solve a problem in chemistry, anatomy, pathology, or history." [1]

Whether we like it or whether we do not, there is an immense empty space of time extending from the creation of man to the time of Abraham. What happened during that time we shall probably never know. If we wish to increase the limits of history we must go to Chaldea, where dynasties are found that can be classified according to their place and date. But it is quite evident that the first chapters of the Bible are not a history of mankind, nor even of one of its branches, for the simple reason that we could with difficulty find one fact for every thousand years, and even then we should not know where to place it.

You may object that you are anxious to retain those first chapters as so many landmarks in the history of the continuity of religion. Very good; but we must bear in mind that that is what they are, for their only importance is that of fingerposts along this wide waste. But let us take care to recognise their true character. You will agree with me when I say that among those persons there are perhaps some names of peoples: if I go so far as to suggest names of towns, you will recall Sidon to mind. That being so, why not allow that among these fragments there are also

[1] *Lettre sur l'Apologétique.*

names which merely stand for an impersonal progress of mankind, lost memories, the source of which no one knows, occupying in history the same relative position as the ether with which we fill space, without fully realizing what it does, simply because we must put something between the starry spheres? . . .

The very fact that nothing so restrained is found anywhere else, that mythology proper is excluded, itself suffices to guard from error anyone who seeks to see things as they really are. These characteristics, taken by themselves, would suffice to show forth the influence of monotheism, and that all is in keeping with the dignity of the dogma of inspiration.

When I began, I said that I placed the history of Original Sin on one side. Not that I desire to affirm the historicity of all the details of the account; on that subject I have elsewhere clearly expressed my mind.[1] But some might perhaps be tempted to conclude, from the ideas I have been developing, that the essential fact itself cannot have been handed down by tradition. I do not think that follows from the premisses. I have endeavoured to draw a distinction between the details and the *core* of stories which may be handed down most faithfully for centuries in the most varied surroundings, everywhere undergoing some transformation because it is everywhere tinged with borrowed colours, yet remaining everywhere recognizable.

The study of religious histories, and particularly of primitive histories, has familiarized folklorists with this

[1] *Revue Biblique*, 1897, p. 341 *seq.*

fact. There seems to me, therefore, no impossibility whatever in the transmission of the account of the Fall from generation to generation for thousands of years.

But even supposing such transmission to be impossible, *dato, non concesso,* we have only to see whether Original Sin, which evades any strict historical proof, is or is not part of the divine revelation. It is quite certain that it is included in revelation. The conclusion therefore is that it has been revealed. And its revelation seems quite what might be expected, considering its capital importance, and its necessary connection with Redemption. If the dogma involves as a necessary consequence the unity of the human race, our reasoning will be the same. And really I fail to see that in this matter we are at all awkwardly placed. History is silent; so there can be no objection from that quarter. Natural science brings against it the difference of races. It was perhaps somewhat of a difficulty, and is perhaps a difficulty even now, for those who maintain the immutability of species. But if moderate evolution tends to predominate science, I should be much surprised if it were not able to explain this phenomenon by its own principles.

On account of the Church's definition, I believe in Original Sin according to the Church's meaning; but abstracting from this dogmatic point, based upon the unshakeable foundation of revelation, there can be no objection to assigning primitive history its true character, even though it may not have been sufficiently understood by the men of bygone days.

It would be casting a slur upon the memory of Bossuet or Pascal to think that had they known what we know they would have obstinately maintained the position they took up. In their day we should have thought as they thought, and have expressed it less well than they did. Would that they were only here now to construct a new synthesis of the continuity of the history of religion!

We are certainly faithful to the spirit of the Fathers when we declare that from the first page of the Bible to the very last the historical criticism must give way to the dogma and authority of the Church. But who shall deny it full scope for action within those limits? The renewal of historical study that has taken place is undeniable, as is also the enormous numbers of new facts, which demand the revision of many generally accepted ideas. Why, then, do you hesitate?

Unless I am mistaken, it is on account of a vague feeling of uneasiness as to where are we going to, and whither are we being led? To that I would answer—We are staying at home, within the bosom of the Church, where we enjoy as much liberty as others for the study of languages and history, together with added security of peace of soul on all essential points, which is a necessary condition of any further research.

In charity, we are bound to assume that all our Catholic scholars are animated with the same good intentions, in spite of the differences of opinion they represent; and if all are not equally competent, the Holy Father has just appointed a tribunal of competent men to solve disputed questions.

Will it be necessary in future to await its decision before speaking? Such is not the intention of the Holy Father. Leo XIII. is not the man to stop scientific research on the plea of keeping the peace—a peace equivalent to sleep, if not to death.

The words I have spoken to you have, I trust, been such—although discussion waxes warm on every side, and is sometimes very bitter—as to help you to catch a glimpse of the possibility of arriving at solutions which can satisfy, at one and the same time, true traditional feeling and the honour of the Church, which can never tolerate anything that conflicts with the candour of her intellectual honesty.

APPENDIX

JESUS CHRIST AND NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM

An Open Letter to Mgr. BATIFFOL

Rector of the *Institut Catholique* of Toulouse

My Dear Friend,—We are told that if there be a time for silence, there is also a time for speaking; and as letters seem to be enjoying a certain measure of popularity, I see no reason why I should not write to you to tell the public what you yourself have always known. Perhaps it might be more gracious to leave M. Loisy alone; but, taken in the light of his own explanation,[1] neither the silence he maintains nor the comments of his friends are of sufficient weight to determine the course we ought to follow.

When *L'Évangile et l'Église* appeared we both spoke out clearly. You were one of the first to raise your voice.[2] I was then in Rome, and hesitated considerably before

[1] "All the Author has to say of the attacks made upon his book in many Catholic newspapers and reviews in France, is—that he does not propose to answer them. As far as in him lies he is anxious to stand aloof both from the sentiments and the spirit which characterize the principal works the attack has called forth."—*Autour d'un petit livre*, p. xxxi.

[2] *Bulletin de la littérature ecclésiastique*, January 1903.

committing myself to words. I was far from agreeing with many of M. Loisy's opponents, and I had no taste for polemical methods which betrayed complete ignorance of the very elements of the subject. Besides, I had just been appointed Consultor to the Biblical Commission, and my action might have been interpreted as showing too much haste and too much zeal. The fact remained, however, that essential doctrines of Faith were at stake. Silence would have been interpreted to mean agreement. And so I wrote.[1]

You are aware of the treatment meted out by M. Loisy's admirers to those who formulated their objections, and gave the reasons upon which they were based. We had never cast the least shade of suspicion upon his motives; our own were shown in a false light. You were discharging your duty as head of an *Institut Catholique*. I merely sought the honour of crossing swords with a worthy foeman. Such details, however, are of quite minor interest.

A much more serious matter is the statement made, even by writers of standing, that we completely misunderstood the author's ideas. He was said to be engaged merely in the task of refuting, and in no other; so that we were not entitled to analyze his ideas, nor to attribute to him a system which had never entered his mind.

In his second little book (*Autour d'un petit livre*), M. Loisy himself undertook to remove any possibility of misunderstanding. While continuing to declare that he did not set forth a complete system of theological doctrine, he admits that it is a "modest essay in constructive history."[2] As regards his motives, we were not mistaken in judging them to be perfectly sound; in fact, they really involved an essay in Apologetics. Given the present state of philosophical knowledge and of historical criticism, his

[1] *Revue Biblique*, April 1903, pp. 292–313.
[2] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. viii.

aim was to indicate the points which imperatively call for explanation or translation. The author was modest enough to leave to the Church the task of finding a formula which would satisfy at once the needs of the past and of the present. But he sketched in its broad lines his own defence of tradition and of the Church.

Now, it is our firm conviction that the foundation he has chosen is unsound, and it is not without uneasiness that we take note of the fact that M. Loisy alone, of all those who start from the same point, does not eventually arrive at the most liberal type of Protestantism. Still, we must admit that there is something noble, something almost tragic in the effort made. And it is certainly in this way that it strikes the minds of otherwise indifferent men, who take up arms for this man who stands alone; and we may be certain that there are Catholics too who base their hopes upon him. His sincerity, his boldness, his learning, and the very brilliancy of his style has brought about this great result. One Catholic Review[1] finds room for the statement "that his last work, which wirepullers failed to get condemned by Leo XIII., is the most masterly production of any priest for a long time past." If one ventures to point out that M. Loisy is in open conflict with the Faith of yesterday, we are told that even now he appeals to the Faith of the future.

So deeply rooted in the modern world are the ideas of evolution and progress!

Unfortunately it remains none the less true that his "essay" imprudently saps the very foundations of Christianity; and the conclusion drawn by many is, that if this system of constructive history holds good, dogma is overthrown. In spite of M. Loisy's readiness to make every possible concession, the impression remains, after reading

[1] In the open column of the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, October 1903, p. 85.

him, that between history and dogma there is unending opposition. That being the case, you considered that it was the duty of those who have never been behind M. Loisy himself in insisting upon the necessity of giving their full weight to all scientifically established conclusions and better methods of work—of those who hold in equal esteem both criticism and history—to state openly what they think of these attempts.

Without entering upon any textual discussion, I wish to take a general survey of the present state of criticism in its bearing upon Jesus Christ.

M. Loisy thought it his duty to point out the changes our ideas must undergo under the penalty of breaking with modern science. I may perhaps be allowed to remark that there is no need to hurry. Such an attitude can be justified by none of the pretensions currently ascribed to Philosophy. Exegetical criticism is still uncertain of its methods, especially with regard to constructive history, and learned men are far from being agreed. Ought, then, the body of the faithful to be disturbed on points which make up the very life of Christianity—such, for instance, as the Divine Institution of the Church, or the very essence of piety, as the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist —merely to satisfy a few troubled souls who might be more at ease in some sort of neo-catholicism? But even that result would not be obtained; for if the method is followed out to its logical conclusion, it goes too far; and a submission of the intellect is still called for, which has no basis whereon to rest. This is what I am about to try and show.

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M. Loisy's dogmatical position calls but for a passing word. It has been made quite clear. M. Loisy accepts from the Church all that the Church teaches—the Divinity

of Christ, the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and the Foundation and Divine Authority of the Church. But he asks the Church to weigh well each of these articles of Faith, and bring them into line with the demands of criticism and of history. It follows clearly from his standpoint, that such criticism and history calls for changes, and not mere explanations. He believes himself to be well within his rights, in fact to be doing his duty, in drawing attention to the danger to which the Church is exposing herself. The change, he contends, will not affect "the substance of the Dogma." This takes us back to the germ —for has not the development of dogma always been compared to that of a germ?

M. Loisy considers that his own past is a guarantee of the future. In spite of the attacks he had to undergo, the theories he defended concerning the literary history of the Old Testament are to-day accepted without the slightest difficulty. So will it be, he hopes and trusts, with his historical exposition of the Gospel, which the Church will be able to bring into harmony with the ancient faith.

There is, however, this difference to be faced: that in matters of dogma the Church is bound by her past; not only has she defined her dogmas, but further defined that they can never be taken in any other sense.[1] Most of M. Loisy's development formulas appear harmless—but only because what he means by "substance" and "essential" is not what is meant by all others. What he terms "legitimate development" would appear to others to be a rejection of the past. The Church will have to decide whether she is going to throw herself into the realms of relativity.

[1] "Si quis dixerit fieri posse ut dogmatibus ab Ecclesia propositis aliquando secundum progressum scientiae sensus tribuendus sit alius ab eo quem intellexit Ecclesia, anathema sit." (Concil. Vatic., *De ratione et fide, can.* 3.)

Now let us take Christology, and look at it in the light of what M. Loisy calls the demands of modern thought. What strikes us at once is, that first and foremost amongst those demands are those made by Philosophy. This is truly a point upon which too much stress cannot be laid, and the author deserves our best thanks for pointing it out. Our anxiety is, however, somewhat relieved when we reach his ultimatum: "If the (Christological) problem . . . . again calls for solution, it is not so much because its history is now better known, as because of the entire renovation which has taken and continues to take place in Modern Philosophy."[1]

The new difficulty, according to M. Loisy, is this: "If we hold, as I believe we must hold, the personality of God as the symbol of His absolute perfection, and of the essential distinction which exists between the reality of God and the reality of the world—is it not clear that this divine personality is of a different order from that of the personality of man, and that the presence of the Personal God at a given moment of human history, in the form of a human being, is a concept which unites in an apparent unity two ideas which can have no common measure, the idea of divine personality and the idea of human personality. Is God a person in the sense in which man is a person? . . . . And further, is it not true to say that whereas the theological notion of personality is metaphysical and abstract, in present-day Philosophy it has become real and psychological? . . . . In reality, dogma has merely defined a metaphysical relation between Jesus Christ and God, and has defined it according to the idea of God, the Transcendent Being. Yet the development of modern Philosophy is distinctly in the direction of the Idea of God as the Immanent Being, standing in need of no intermediaries in order to work in the world and in man."[2]

[1] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 128. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 151 *seq.*

After that we may pause to take breath—for whenever did Christian Philosophy ever fall into such errors as involve the idea of a God personal in the same way as man, a common measure between Him and us, a God who stands in need of intermediaries?[1]

Can anyone really imagine that these difficulties are new; that the teachers of old doubted the reality of personality, and were ignorant of its psychological *rôle* when we see that union "in person" was the phrase chosen precisely to indicate that all the actions of Jesus Christ were at once both divine and human, having the same principle of action operating in two natures? It would be almost ridiculous to recall here the *ens analogum* and other suchlike concepts meant to indicate that we really possess being, even though it be ever so far removed from the true Being.

If that is what Modern Philosophy thinks of Christian Philosophy, it certainly wants someone to explain to it our

[1] Possibly M. Loisy may be thinking of the first ages of the Church. The objection, at once historical and philosophical, really comes to this: it declares that the Church, or more precisely St. John, would never have reached the idea of the Word Incarnate had not the idea of an intermediary Logos then been known, cp. p. 152: "The Word was at first conceived as a sort of indispensable intermediary between an absolute and unchanging God and a finite changing world. God existed, so to speak, outside the world, and the Word occupied a place between the two, as an emanation of God with regard to the world. *And hence it was that* in the cosmic order the Word of John was Creator, and in the human order the Revealer." That would be quite right if only the words "*and hence it was that*," which we have underlined, were changed into "*while on the contrary*." Certainly the Incarnate Word is a theological adaptation, but John could only have made it with the knowledge already attained of Christ's Divinity, which enabled him to give the Word its true character. The history of the term "consubstantial" is the history of the victory, more and more complete, of the Johannine idea over the older concept.

formulas, for I will not go so far as to suppose that it needs anyone to translate them for it.

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But even if we exclude the formula of Personal Union, the fact still remains that Jesus Christ is God. M. Loisy asks the modern man to declare with the Church that Christ is God. Has he any warrant for so doing?

Our old-fashioned apologists were wont to put in the forefront of their proofs the testimony of Jesus Himself. Jesus declared Himself perfect man and acted as a man, but He spoke and acted as God. There was nothing for it but to take sides regarding this testimony; you must either suspect imposture, pity the hallucination, or adore. Yet, according to M. Loisy, the full extent of Christ's own testimony is this declaration that He is the Messias to come.

It is true that for M. Loisy this idea of the Messias implies "a peculiar relationship between God and the Man-Christ, a relation which is not limited to the mere knowledge of God, who is good, but something infinitely more mysterious and profound, that kind of deep and ineffable penetration of the Man-Christ which is sensibly figured by the descent of the Spirit upon the baptized Christ"[1]

That I cannot allow: it is an idea not found in the Gospel, for the simple reason that this "deep and ineffable penetration" is a modern conception intended to replace the idea of a Personal Union. At the time of the Baptism a voice from Heaven explains the symbolism by the words, "This is my beloved Son." There is no more question of deep and ineffable penetration than there is of Personal Union. At best, then, this "deep penetration" is quite a modern theological conclusion; one which gives very little trouble

[1] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 134.

to the mind, I admit, but which the mind remains perfectly free to accept or reject, and which certainly does not necessarily follow from the idea of the Messias to come, which Christ may have had the consciousness of being.

Further, we may ask, how does this "deep penetration" lead to the definite statement that Christ is God? If you exclude the testimony of Christ Himself and that of the first witnesses of His life, how are you going to get anyone to admit this accidentally-met-with divinity, sketched by Paul, and finally affirmed by poor John, as Julian the Apostate used to call him? In France I can see no one to do so. In other countries you may meet with them. It is what one of my English correspondents would call "a professorial religion," made for the use of Professors of Protestant Theology, who, be it understood, are only bound to believe by social usages. Ever since the days of Kant, and more particularly since Albert Ritschl, pure rationalism is not in high favour. People want a religion, and the Christian Religion is the only one worthy of the name; it is emphatically *the* religion, as Harnack has it. In Germany, however, it does not go so far as to admit the divinity of Christ. Some, like Wellhausen or Harnack, are content to enjoy the wisdom of the sage, or, like J. Weiss, to admire the prophet. The English are, generally speaking, more conciliatory. They delight in proclaiming Him to be true God, who was so perfect a model of Justice. But this "professorial religion," so rich in shades, could never live amongst us, for the simple reason that outside Protestantism such a type of religious mentality does not exist. There is the further reason that the French mind is impatient of ambiguities.

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I ought, of course, to add that these Professors do not entirely give up the idea of a Church, or at least of a com-

munity. Harnack's little book continually speaks of meeting and union. Moreover, I know of no school of Protestants which denies the apostolic ministry or the society of the just. . . . When M. Loisy declares that "for the historian continuity of faith constitutes the continuity of the Gospel and of the Church" (p. 171), or when he triumphantly concludes his dilemma, with the words, "Did Christ wish to found the society of the just and the universal ministry of salvation? That is the whole question, and the answer appears to me simple" (p. 173). Many Protestants might rejoin that in reality the answer is in their favour. One is really astounded when M. Loisy calmly concludes, "That, my dear sir, is the solid basis upon which the Catholic Church rests" (p. 173); for the question is not one of ministry, but of the authority of doctrine and of jurisdiction —a point which M. Loisy incidentally grants, but which certainly does not follow from his inquiry. When, however, he declares "that the reconciliation of the rights of the sovereign individual with those of the servant authority is not effected in practice according to any fixed formula" (p. 181), he is using platform expressions upon which no stress need be laid. But when he writes, "In the eyes of Faith, the Immortal Christ, who wills the Church, wills all that tends to the preservation of the Church, and of the Gospel in the Church" (p. 174), we may fairly ask him to discuss the conditions he lays down. No historian can deny that the Church is the historical continuation of the Gospel, but all Protestants consider that the Gospel ministry is far better assured amongst themselves. What was Christ's wish? Of that the historian knows nothing: "I say the same with regard to the Institution of the Church, in so far as that Institution corresponds to a formal and special wish of Christ, since that wish can be no more verified by the historian, as such, than even the glory of the Risen Christ" (p. 169).

Are there really men in France who could be drawn to the Church by suchlike reasoning? You are a better judge of that than I am, but I fear they do not lay more stress upon service than they do upon authority.

May it not be said to be taking advantage of the readers' credulity to merely leave them the choice between two such extremes as either "nonsense" or "follow me"? As far as the Church is concerned, "there is, of course, an answer ready-made: Jesus Christ during His earthly life positively instituted the Church as we know it, with its Pope, its bishops, its symbol of doctrine, and the sacraments of its religious worship" (p. xxvi). Now, my dear friend, that is not exactly what you say in your studies on *L'Église naissante*. As for Christ, "certainly no one will ever make the most inexperienced of critics ever believe that Jesus taught in so many words, and at one and the same time, the Christology of Paul, that of John, and the doctrine of Nicæa, Ephesus, and Chalcedon" (p. 136). Nor is this what Père Rose told us in his *Études sur les Évangiles*.

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No doubt the author did not feel very confident about this way of forcing the alternative.

It is, however, not without a deep feeling of sadness that we see him making use of threats. Even though his own solutions were found to be insufficient—and all that can be said for him is that he does not for a moment admit any ground for such a supposition—it is Christianity that will stand condemned, for it is impossible that "criticism" should be mistaken.

Here, then, infallible criticism enters upon the scene! "It has been urged in objection that, in that case, the Christ of History would be far inferior to the Christ of Faith; that

He would not be the same ; that the Gospel of Jesus and the Faith of the Church would be but a twofold illusion. Now, if such conclusions were proved, no blame would attach to the historian, and those who give expression to such reasoning would be guilty of great imprudence. Facts are facts ; and the first conclusion to be drawn from them, if they are such, is that they are not otherwise. A mountain of syllogisms can avail nothing against a real grain of sand" (p. 114).

Here again I disagree, and a distinction must be made.

Facts are facts evidently, but critical combinations are not always facts, and not unfrequently there is nothing like a syllogism for revealing their weakness. When the discussion turns on an historical or topographical fact, M. Loisy passes on quickly, but into documents he digs deep down to extract the idea they contain. More particularly, when the Gospel-problem is in question, he is most anxious to discover the real thoughts of our Saviour in the Gospels which may not have had as their precise object the reproduction of those thoughts, for the compilers embodied the subject-matter of the Gospels in such setting as befitted the needs of their time or of their hearers. All will admit the difficulty of such a critic's task. He has always to be on the watch to discover what comes from the Church and what comes from Christ :—a definite canon having been made out of the supposition that Christ never foresaw any of the future wants of His followers, or any of the circumstances in which they might happen to find themselves. The game is an interesting one, and may work out so well as to delight the looker-on. M. Bugge has gone so far as to say that, to judge from the way in which critics not unfrequently set about it, it is like a game of billiards on a table without pockets : given the position of the balls, it rarely happens that there are not many ways of getting a cannon. The

successful stroke was of course a lucky one, but another might have played in another way with similar success.[1]

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This is doubtless the reason why M. Loisy's arguments have made less impression upon the minds of critics than upon those of others: critical minds are used to the flux and reflux of systems, and they know how dangerous it is to let oneself be lured by any one fixed point of view. Those who are not within the inner ring may be afraid, thinking that they are face to face with established conclusions, with a unanimous agreement of specialists; in a word, with the verdict of Science. We can assure them that there is nothing of the kind.

Even if we only take into account those who are not Catholics—and to do so would be unfair to begin with—we should have to draw a distinction between Germany and England; and even Germany is not wanting in sound and relatively conservative critics. And even in the ranks of the liberal critics themselves there is no attempt to deny that Jesus Christ acted and spoke with a consciousness superhuman as well as human. Thus Wernle, who will not allow the Divinity of Christ, declares, "the wonder in Jesus is that we find the consciousness of superhuman being together with the most profound humility before God, a fact the more remarkable in the Synoptics, for with them He rather conceals the *Ego* He unveils in the Gospel of John."

[1] To take one example out of many. According to M. Loisy, Luke supposed the πρῶτον of Matthew because it seemed to allow of a secondary care being taken of the goods of the body—following in that Holtzmann; but in the note he adds, "Wernle admits the contrary hypothesis: he thinks the πρῶτον of Matthew weakens the sentence" (*Le Discours sur le Montagne*, Matt. vi. 33).

The same dilemma, then, still confronts us: either God or what? And those who do not answer, God! are still seeking.

The last twelve years, it is true, have seen the birth and growth of the system of the Messias to come. Jesus thought He was destined to be the Messias. In fact, that is now perhaps the most generally received solution, and M. Loisy has sketched its broad features. But does it not strike you as being as much opposed to the facts of the Gospel as is the Ritschlian conception of a merely moral and interior Kingdom of Heaven? The apparent agreement of critics of this school vanishes as soon as the arguments are reached. J. Weiss, who seems to stand godfather to the new opinion, does not exclude the testimony Jesus bore to Himself in the *logion* "Confitebor tibi Pater." M. Loisy is almost alone in rejecting it, together with Wrede, Brandt, and to some extent Wernle, but he appears to understand its meaning much better than those who do not suspect its authenticity.

If Jesus is the Messias to come, you have to explain how He came so easily to assume throughout His life the name and fulfil the functions of the Son of man, which was precisely the attribute of the heavenly Messias. On that point agreement is far from being reached.

The leading teachers of ten years ago, and amongst them Bernard Weiss, are not alone in raising objections against the new doctrine. There are others who would even go further still. Men are now to be found who can see in the primitive Gospel no single phrase in which Jesus pretended to be more than a mere man: such is the theory set forth in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. Wrede wonders at the confidence J. Weiss shows in his discovery. If the idea of a Glorious Messias reacted in the mind of the Primitive Church upon the whole way of looking at the life of Jesus Christ, can we

be quite sure that He Himself entertained the strange idea of proclaiming Himself the Messias to come? Who can guarantee that He had that firm trust, the source of which it is impossible to discover. May not the Primitive Church, which attributed to His death a redeeming value, of which, it is pretended, Jesus never dreamed, have imagined His Messiahship by way of anticipation? And by an extreme application of logic with which no fault can be found, once the premisses and the methods are admitted, Wrede declares that the words the Evangelists put into the mouth of Christ concerning His *parousia* presuppose the Christian idea of the Messias. "To come" means to come upon earth, and Jesus Christ was upon earth. Was He then aware that He would rise again, thus to speak of coming? And does not the words "to come" better befit the lips of the Christian community than His own? For after all He ought to have spoken of *coming back*. From the merely critical standpoint, it is certainly impossible to see why the words of Jesus Christ concerning the *parousia* should be the only ones unaffected by the existence of Christianity.

And this brings us to a famous difficulty, and a very old one, which, forcibly expressed as it is by M. Loisy, may have made some impression.

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A historian, he says, "would never think of forcing the Gospel text and his own intelligence to make out that Jesus, when He speaks of the nearness of the coming of the Heavenly Kingdom, really reserved an unlimited number of centuries before the end of the world. At the same time, whilst making every allowance for any addition primitive tradition may have made to the declarations of the Master, he will beware of saying that the Apostles concocted the idea of the nearness of the Messianic coming. He knows

that if such were the case, almost the whole of the Saviour's discourses would have to be taken as apocryphal, so that the consequences of attempting to magnify the knowledge of Christ would be, that we should end in knowing nothing at all about His teaching, that we should ascribe to the disciples a belief different from that which He preached, and we should found the Church upon a contradiction. Those who like to take to these paths of negation are free to do so."[1]

Here once more you perceive what a rigid alternative is presented, stripped of any of the light and shade which goes to form one of the chief characteristics of history. Sane and sober criticism will beware of asserting that the Apostles concocted the idea of the nearness of the Messianic coming: it was, in fact, so near, that it began with Jesus Christ who announced it. The discourses of our Saviour retain all their force and value independently of the date of the end of the world, although the whole of His teaching leads men to live in such a way as to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. No one will lightly affirm that Jesus reserved unlimited ages before the end of the world, since He clearly states that we are to set to work without concerning ourselves with apocalyptic calculations of which He would have none; nor will anyone assert, with M. Loisy, that the direct meaning of His exhortations was detachment from a world about to perish.

But what are we to say of the knowledge of Christ? The question is a serious one, and was giving me much food for thought at the time when M. Loisy was writing his articles on *l'Apocalypse Synoptique*.[2] From that time I made note of passages in the works of Fathers of great authority who did not hesitate to limit the human knowledge of Christ; and although I, for my part, could not give up the Thomistic

[1] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 141. [2] *Revue Biblique*, 1896.

teaching, I asked theologians—my question was perhaps very naïf—if it were not possible "to see God's essence without penetrating into the secrets of His will." I should have liked them to study these questions over again from the very beginning.[1] They have done nothing of the kind, we are told, and M. Loisy censures them severely for their neglect. But it may be asked whether the way in which he formulates the question is not extravagantly declamatory?

Scientific criticism could not attribute to Jesus Christ "unlimited knowledge except on the supposition, historically inconceivable, and disturbing to the moral sense, which admits that Christ as man had the knowledge of God, and that He deliberately gave over His disciples and posterity to ignorance and error concerning many things which He might without the slightest inconvenience have revealed. What would be a conjecture unworthy of the memory of a man of genius concerning whom it might be made, has nothing to recommend it in the case of Jesus Christ. The theologian may delight therein if he thinks it indispensable; he is free to picture to himself our Saviour hiding His infinite knowledge and keeping His followers in ignorance . . . ," etc.[2]

Now what is it we are really talking about? Does M. Loisy agree with conservative critics that it would have been fitting that Jesus should have given His opinion on the origin of the Pentateuch? Did He not proclaim loud enough all that was of importance to salvation, and would not the least inconvenience of all the rest have been to lead souls away from that all-important idea? It would seem—no doubt it is unintentional—that here Jesus is only a great man compared to great men. For those who admit His divinity the difficulty is lessened, for Jesus was not concerned to reveal as man what God has made His rule not to reveal.

[1] *Revue Biblique*, 1896, p. 454. [2] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 139.

It would be well to remember here that between the person of God and that of man there is no common measure. However great a man of genius may be, he is groping in the dark, and the little light of which he catches glimpses he is forcibly driven to communicate to his fellowmen. He has no hesitation about engaging in discussions which allow him to demonstrate the superiority of his views. Jesus does not discuss, He does not refute; He teaches, and His starting-point is not His own knowledge, but the knowledge of others. To souls of good will He speaks efficaciously. We should feel ill at ease to see Him make use of His superior knowledge to triumph over His adversaries. He gently brushes aside prejudices and sophisms, and makes use of all that comes to hand to raise minds and hearts on high. The Messianic tradition particularly is the field of this divine teaching.

Whatever may be said of scientific and historical truths, it must be admitted that Jesus Christ possessed at least a supereminent knowledge of religious truths. He does not owe it to visions, since He never alleges them, as did the prophets; He was not suddenly illumined, as was Buddha, after lengthy meditations. He knows because He is the Son who alone knows the Father.[1] Decidedly this awkward text ought to be got rid of, otherwise the conclusion might be drawn that the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as expressed by St. John, is the same as that of which the Synoptics have preserved the echo. Now it is this that particularly concerns us, since the testimony borne by Jesus to religious truth is the groundwork of our Faith. Nor would it be too hard a task to show that Jesus Christ devoted special care to the formation of His disciples in view of the future; that, however, regards the Institution of the Church, with which I am not here concerned. As for His knowledge of the

[1] Matt. xi. 27.

past or of natural truths, it is as much a matter of indifference for the student of the Gospel, as is, for the commentator on Genesis, the knowledge of Adam, or the way in which he would have transmitted to his descendants original justice had he been in a position to do so. If Jesus Christ is a mere man, He evidently only possessed the knowledge of His time, and that in a very limited measure; if He was God, it was not fitting that as man He should make use of the infused knowledge He had received. These, however, are questions of fitness and psychology, which make no difference to the explanation of the Gospel.

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Good fortune has not always attended the efforts of apologists in the nineteenth century. Perhaps they did not sufficiently realize the fact that the best apologetic is thoroughgoing search for truth, without any ulterior motive beyond the discovery of the truth. In their defence it must be admitted that they were face to face with opponents who attacked merely for the sake of attacking, and so they defended for the sake of defending. An objection was made that, with the authority of the Scriptures resting upon the authority of the Church, and that of the Church upon the Scriptures, there was a vicious circle. Catholics replied by making a distinction between the twofold character of the Evangelists. They might easily be considered, for apologetical purposes, as ordinary, that is profane, historians, but really extraordinary for their trustworthiness, their simplicity, and moreover as eye-witnesses, at all events in the case of St. Matthew and St. John. They present, therefore, in the very highest degree, all the guarantees criticism could exact in order to establish facts. Amongst those facts is the testimony Jesus Christ bore to Himself and that of which

He was the recipient as the true Son of God, His resurrection, and the Institution of the Church. In presence of these facts, soundly established by history, the intellect, inclined no doubt to believe by many other considerations, reaches the conclusion that Jesus Christ was God and the Church divinely instituted; the Church then proclaims the canonical character of the Scriptures.

This argument, in its broad lines, I consider to be still sound; and here, I think, I entirely differ from M. Loisy, who contends that history is incapable of establishing these facts. To this point, however, I shall return. What I want to insist upon at present is, the incompleteness of the old form of the argument, and upon the impossibility of giving the Evangelists' testimony its full value if we divide them into two by isolating this historical character. Here M. Loisy is right: the Evangelists are no ordinary historians; they presuppose belief, and they aim at producing belief.

No one now casts doubt upon their sincerity, so it would be waste of time to defend it. Since, however, our aim is apologetical, would it be of any use setting them forth first of all as eye-witnesses? This, of course, would not apply to St. Matthew or St. Luke, two disciples, and St. Luke tells us so clearly enough. Nor yet may we make the claim for the Gospel of St. Matthew, since our Canonical Gospel is written in Greek, and, according to tradition, St. Matthew wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic. Further, we have but to read his Gospel to realize that he does not pose as an eye-witness.

As regards St. John, you have justly remarked that "those historians who are inclined to see in the Fourth Gospel a combination of Johannine thought and of objective personal reminiscences of Christ have to admit the difficulty they find, and which is ever being brought up against them—the difficulty of recognizing the two elements. I shall make no attempt to justify their view, which, as far

as I am concerned, I hold to be legitimate."[1] That, of course, is quite enough to prevent our alleging in all confidence the testimony of the historian John, considered as such.

Can it be said that these historians adhered to the order of the facts with all the precision generally supposed? St. Luke may have aimed at so doing, but was the order at which he aimed purely chronological? It scarcely appears to have been the case; and yet without such an aim, no one can be said to be an historian in the full sense of the term.

However, it is the law of history that, generally speaking, words cannot be transmitted with complete accuracy, and that facts change their aspect in the course of time. There are phrases so cleanly cut that they pass through the ages, and there are facts which are absolutely certain, but here we are concerned with the subject-matter of history viewed as a whole. Now if we compare the Evangelists together, all alike being equally canonical and inspired, we see that Inspiration has not preserved them from the common lot of humanity; and further, that they have been subjected to the other law, that even the historian who is most alive to his duties as historian, introduces into his narration something of his own ideas and of the ideas of his environment: hence the differences between them. On the other hand, their coincidences prove that they made use of written sources—a new element in the Gospel-problem, and one most difficult to estimate. Critics really seem quite agreed on the point that St. Mark may be considered, together with another document termed *Logia* as a source, relatively to St. Matthew and St. Luke. St. Luke had other sources at his disposal, and we may conjecture that St. Mark also made use of earlier documents. No one can blame M. Loisy for making use of this hypothesis as his basis: you yourself,

[1] *Revue Biblique*, 1903, p. 513.

my dear friend, have accepted it in your *Six leçons sur les Évangiles*, for it is pretty generally admitted.[1]

What conclusion are we to draw from all this, concerned as we are with fixing the limits of history and its apologetical value?

Very often it will be impossible to discover the chronological order of the discourses and of the events. Very often, too—in fact, we may say generally—it will be quite impossible to know absolutely the exact words used by Jesus Christ, unless it be in the case of solemn words which made a deep impression on men's minds. Many instances may occur. The agreement of the three Synoptics does not prove that Jesus used precisely such or such words to cure a sick man, because that agreement may be the result of none of them feeling called upon to make any change in the one source of which they disposed, and which, perhaps, did not carry its scruples to such a degree of accuracy. If they do not agree, the doubt is further increased; it is possible that one of them may preserve the exact words, but it is equally possible that they may be preserved nowhere. Now, precisely because they follow the most ancient sources, their testimony goes back to more ancient witnesses, who themselves were eye-witnesses; and since they follow them freely, therefore no argument can be drawn from their silence as to the non-existence of the parallel passage in the source. As each had his own particular end in view, they might omit a fact of which they were aware, and which did not appear to them at all suspicious, merely because they did not consider it of use in their narrative. Finally, when mention is made, for instance, of the private source of Luke, that does not mean an amplification of tradition, but simply a characteristic which was not found in the sources of Mark

[1] I do not, however, conclude, as does M. Loisy, that St. Matthew was written after 70. But this is, of course, a special question.

and Matthew, and which St. Luke, true to his promise, would not have accepted had he not been sure of the authenticity of its origin. And thus it is, that we see even the most liberal critics recognize here and there that Luke had a more ancient source, and that he was a better interpreter of tradition. Even St. Matthew himself, who is accused of having developed more than the others the Christian point of view, contains more archaic characteristics: he, for instance, has faithfully retained that Palestinian and Semitic colouring which St. Luke was led to tone down for the sake of his Gentile readers.

Now, does not the conclusion seem to be that it is easier to extract from the Evangelists a system of religous teaching than to put them together and write an historical account in the strictest sense of the word? After recognizing these facts, critics have made the mistake of trying to write that history themselves. What happened, we may say, on a small scale to the Evangelists, has in their case taken place on a large scale: each, according to his own idea of Jesus, has reconstituted the life of Christ. When they despaired of getting as far as Jesus Himself, they at least re-wrote hypothetically the primitive source. They knew why this Evangelist had added or omitted such a word, which must therefore be added to or omitted from the primitive source. I have already said what I think of this amusing game: occasionally it works out all right, but on other occasions it misses the point. It necessarily follows, however, that a history made up of the sum-total of these particular combinations has every chance of being erroneous. It is certainly subjective, for it is impossible that the critic should not be guided by his ideas on historical development, in his choice of what must be taken away from or left to the primitive tradition. Is it not the safer and more objective course to take ecclesiastical tradition as our guide in this

matter? And if we do this, how are we to view the relation of the Synoptics to history and to the Church?

Their absolute sincerity we have already placed beyond question. It is to the honour of modern critics that they never doubt it. It is clear, therefore, that they wrote nothing but what they considered true. We have no right to suppose that they related any fact in the life of Christ without believing it, nor that they placed in His mouth any teaching simply because they wanted to speak to the Church under cover of His authority. Further, although they had no pretension to be historians like Thucydides—probably they knew nothing of any such way of writing history—their aim certainly was to relate real facts, facts which they held to be the groundwork of their belief, and their intention was that those facts should be held to be certain on their testimony. If they are not eye-witnesses, they had recourse to sources; they made no statement regarding essential facts that was not matter of public notoriety throughout the Church, so that their testimony is not an isolated one, but that of the first Christian generation—of that generation which St. Paul instructed in the doings of our Saviour. It is certain that in their eyes the facts did not exist apart from their supernatural character, but does this character deprive them of their reality as historical phenomena? Why that should be I cannot understand.

It may, in a certain sense, be said that the Incarnation is not an historical fact, nor yet the Resurrection of Jesus Christ in so far as it places Him in His glory; and in any case it is certain that history is incompetent to establish His Divinity. But it can establish the facts of His life, which may serve as the basis of the act of faith.

The supernatural character of the facts, and the affirmation of faith as regards their religious meaning, does not alter the conditions in which the phenomena are subjected to

examination. If the external phenomenon can be established, there seems to be no reason why the Evangelists, whose testimony is corroborated by the whole Church, should not be accepted as valid witnesses.

The question of method still remains to be settled. Since criticism has made it clear that it is impossible to attain precise historical knowledge of details in so large a number of cases, more remains to be done than merely to make a selection of primitive details, based upon a comparison of the texts made under the influence of a preconceived theory. Would it not be the wiser course to first take the documents as they stand, and attentively study each Gospel with a view to reaching the principal statements made by Jesus Christ, the characteristics of His teaching and the main facts of His life?

Then would be the proper time for comparing the Synoptics together on those broad lines: the Synoptics would cover much of the same ground, and would furnish a solid basis for the developments of St. John. Further, we should bring the writing of the Gospel into closer relation with the Church herself. The Evangelists lose none of their weight as witnesses because they are in part her organs; as they are not eye-witnesses, they duly inspire full confidence because their witness is that of all. In fact, we may say that the ultimate decision lies with the Church, or even simply with the actual usage of the Church. Let us take an instance, my dear friend, from your studies on the Eucharist.[1] You had to face this fact: St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 24) and St. Luke (xxii. 19) alone record at the Last Supper the words, "Do this in commemoration of me." Mark and Matthew are silent on the point. Evidently it would be much too arbitrary a conclusion to say that therefore the sources said nothing about it, and that it is a

[1] *Revue Biblique*, October 1903.

Pauline addition. But the question is definitely solved, as you show quite clearly, by the fact that the Church repeated the Supper, and that it would be impossible to explain her conduct had she not been commanded to do so. The usage of the Church and the Gospel text lend mutual support, and taken together constitute an irrefragable testimony. Anyone who takes the trouble to carefully compare your own close discussion, with the pages devoted by M. Loisy to deducing the beginnings of the Eucharist from the belief in the presence of the Risen Jesus with His own followers in the common meal, that is, in the Eucharistic Supper, will understand, I think, the difference there is between the two methods.

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According to M. Loisy, it was only after the Resurrection that the expectation of the nearness of the Coming was finally disposed of, "so that the passages which really concern the Institution of the Church are the words of Christ glorified." Now, from the historical standpoint of the author, it is an extremely serious matter to place all Christian institutions at the time of the Resurrection. From the Catholic standpoint the consequences are of less importance, since the Risen Christ is no less real, no less living, than was Jesus during His mortal life. But we are concerned with mere history, and the witness it is competent to furnish. It may be doubted whether many historians would be content with going only half way, as the author does. When he denies history the power of furnishing a complete and adequate proof of a supernatural fact, the precautionary adjective he uses seems quite sufficient to safeguard the accuracy of the idea. But if the historian goes much further—unless words

here no longer retain their ordinary meaning—and reserves his opinion as to "the objective reality of the apparitions,"[1] it is hard to see how he can consider undeniable the fact of the apparitions without at once branding them as probable illusions. However, he will find it difficult to do so, for the texts are so clear in their reference to physical contact that the fact of the return of the body to life must be accepted or rejected. The historian who has made up his mind not to admit the supernatural, will absolutely reject it, and instead of saying that the belief of the Apostles was occasioned by the apparition, he will prefer to suppose that the apparitions were due to the vivid excitement arising from their faith.

In any case, once the objective reality of the apparitions is involved in doubt, it is easy to see the degree of objective reality which can be granted to the words pronounced by the apparitions. Everything vanishes in the dim light of faith, and the message of Easter Day has no value of its own. All that remains now is the right of calling upon the historian to explain the fact of the belief of the Church, which is certainly not an apparition the reality whereof cannot be proved.

Jesus died after proclaiming that He would be the Messias: the apparitions in themselves would be no sufficient reason for belief in His divinity were this fact to be isolated from all the rest. When, then, will the conviction dawn that Jesus was God? With St. Paul? with St. John? . . . . and were they able to draw with them the whole Church? At this stage sound historical criticism protests against so flimsy solution. The three Synoptics, from three different points of view, agree in showing how much in Christ the idea of His being the Son of God surpassed the Messianic idea, so much so that this Sonship can only be

[1] *L'Évangile et l'Église*, 2nd edition, p. 119 *seq.*

understood in the obvious sense. This opinion is certainly the faith of the Church. Now, they made use of sources. The idea runs through the Gospels, discreetly and in a manner veiled. It has to be drawn, so to speak, out of the simplest and most authentic of the sayings of Jesus Christ. How did Paul, who never knew Jesus, bring it to pass that his history should be re-written and transformed to suit his own personal ideal of the Risen Christ, and how was it that the first followers of Christ stood by in silence whilst this change was taking place? We may well call for the bringing back again of "Petrinism," which at least indicated one of the necessary steps on the way; and if that has been found to be untenable, it is quite clear that there never was any "Paulinism" of this kind either.

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The time, however, has not yet come for an examination of the facts. We were only concerned with comparing the methods. An attempt was made to isolate the testimony of the Evangelists, to make them mere historians, almost to make them mere critics, with an eye for facts alone—and then to return to them as canonical and inspired writers, whose every word is the exact expression of the truth. To this course others have rightly objected that the Evangelists are witnesses of the Faith. But when the conclusion is then drawn that they relate almost nothing at all about the real life of Jesus Christ, simply because they have written it as it was transformed by the Faith of the Church, and that they are no longer witnesses to facts because they look at them under their supernatural aspect, we reply that it is impossible that the belief of the Church should rest upon nothing at all, in reality it rests upon facts, the objective reality of which had been duly established, and that the

Evangelists, witnesses of the faith as they are, bear none the less testimony to the facts.

This middle course will, we think, allow us to bring solid argument to bear against a premature solution the consequences of which would be so disastrous. It has been said that Jesus did not consider He had any other mission but to prepare the world for the judgement which was about to put an end to its destinies, and that He had no other title but that of the predestined Messias such as the Jews expected. M. Loisy considers that this is so solidly established that all that remains for Catholicism to do is to fall into line with history on this point. But such was certainly not the idea of the Synoptics, nor was it the idea of the Church, nor yet of St. Paul. No artificial combinations can shake this triple testimony.

There yet remains to be made a closer study of the idea of the Kingdom of God and of the Messias. It has yet to be shown that the idea of the Messias was as narrow as it is now maintained to have been, and whether Jesus Christ was not Himself conscious that His mission and His person went beyond the general expectation of His time. Criticism and history will again come to our assistance in the study of this difficult problem, for we still contend that they are in nowise compromised, nor yet have we lost our trust in them.

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